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*The Gift  
of  
Henry Barrett Loomis  
to  
Stanford University*

Ward Cheney

Mary Bennett Larned









ORATIONS AND ADDRESSES  
OF  
GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

VOLUME III.







ORATIONS AND ADDRESSES  
OF  
GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS  
//

EDITED BY  
CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

VOLUME III.  
HISTORICAL AND MEMORIAL ADDRESSES



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Page v., line 13, and page 85, line 4, for "1876" read "1875."

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**MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK**

**AN ORATION DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION OF THE  
STATUE OF MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK, AT  
WEST POINT, N. Y., OCT. 21, 1868**



On 7th November, 1864, the Sixth Corps of the Army of the Potomac were then encamped on Cedar Creek, in the Valley of the Shenandoah, Major-General H. G. Wright, the corps commander, called together the division and brigade commanders, and at this meeting it was proposed and decided to erect at West Point, N. Y., a bronze statue of Major-General John Sedgwick who had recently been killed while in command of the corps. A committee, consisting of the corps and division commanders, was appointed to effect this design. The funds estimated to be necessary were promptly supplied by the corps. The statue was made by Mr. Launt Thompson, and on October 27, 1868, it was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies.

## MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

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UNDER this October sky, among these historic hills, with this historic river flowing at our feet ; here, upon ground that Washington once trod, and which knew the darkest tragedy of the Revolution ; beneath that flag, the bright morning star of hope to the nations—the flag that now floats unchallenged from this central post to the remotest frontier ; surrounded by fields golden with immeasurable harvests, by homes of happiness and peace, by hearts of fidelity to country and to man, we come to honor the memory of the brave and modest soldier who died to give to our homes that peace, to confirm in our hearts that fidelity, to keep those fields prosperous and secure—your father, men of the Sixth Corps—our soldier, fellow-citizens—the silent, affectionate, heroic leader, whom the eye desiring sees not, whom the ear attentive hears not ;

“ Whose part, in all the pomp that fills  
The circuit of the summer hills,  
Is, that his grave is green.”

“ Death hath this also,” says Bacon, “ that it openeth the gate to good fame.” But good fame, in turn, con-

quers death. He is not dead, although we no more see him. Behold how vast and various is his life! In this fair and noble statue he lives again. On the most heroic page of our history he lives and moves. In your hearts he is immortal. In the deeper splendor of the flag he bore, in the supremacy of the Union he maintained, in the equality in that Union which he secured, in the larger power and increased justice of the regenerated country that he served, John Sedgwick lives now and shall live forever. Natural and noble and beautiful is the instinct that inspires our hands to build monuments to the illustrious dead. We carve their names upon memorial stone; exquisitely the sculptor moulds their forms in bronze or marble; but they carve their names upon history; they impress civilization with their likeness; and whiter than marble, more lasting than bronze, is the monument which their influence builds in our purer purposes and nobler lives. The American Union is the great monument of Washington and the men of the Revolution; the American Union, as the security of equal rights, is the monument of Sedgwick, and of three hundred thousand of our brothers who rest with him.

The tale of his life is the simple story of a brave and good man who did his duty, and died in doing it. Sedgwick was but one of the soldiers of the Union, in the fierce struggle with which the land still rocks and the air thrills. That struggle is as old as history. It is fought by the tongue and pen as earnestly as with the sword and shell. It is the contest for the largest individual freedom. Now it is a nation fighting for inde-

pendence ; then a man asserting moral and intellectual liberty. Now it is Leonidas and the Persians linked in the death-struggle at Thermopylæ ; then it is Galileo wrestling with the Inquisition. There, upon the continent of Europe, it is Philip II. and the Netherlands ; again, in England, it is the King and Parliament. Yesterday it was the Colonies against the mother-country ; to-day it is the Union against the Confederacy. Three hundred years ago it was Gerard shooting the Prince of Orange ; three years ago it was Wilkes Booth shooting Abraham Lincoln. But everywhere and always, in whatever crude and imperfect form, it is a movement of the same conflict—it is the struggle between those who declare that some men have no rights, and those who hold the truth to be self-evident that all men are created equal.

In Europe, three centuries ago, the cause of the people took form as the Protestant Reformation, and, transferred to the battle-field, was the thirty years' war. In England—drawn to a finer point in the sermons of stern preachers, in the debates in Parliament, in the loud snarl of pamphlets—it was known as Puritanism. But, at length, it was preaching and debating no longer. At Edgehill, John Pym's speeches had become pikes, and Charles's falsehoods, swords. The Cavalier fought for privilege ; the Puritan, for the people. The struggle was fierce and long, and, when the smoke of battle rolled away, Puritanism remained bivouacked upon the field. But its complete victory was reserved for another country and another continent. The old Puritanism was, doubtless, gloomy and severe—the tree that bore the rosy and delicate fruit of American liberty was knotted

and gnarled. But while the Cavalier, the Tory, and the aristocrat, here as everywhere, have always derided Puritanism, remember that the greatest of all English rulers was a Puritan; the greatest of all English poets but one was a Puritan. The Puritan policy abroad swept the Mediterranean of pirates, and protected the Protestants of France and Savoy. The Puritan policy at home defended civil and religious liberty against despotism, mitred as a bishop and crowned as a king. Across the sea, it planted the rocks of New England with the seed of popular liberty and equal rights. The harvest is as vigorous as the soil, for freedom is a rude plant and loves the cooler latitudes. In the auspicious air of a new continent the Puritan spirit became modified and enlarged. Out of strength came forth sweetness. Government by church-members became government by the people. John Pym became James Otis. The larger and generous Puritanism of America inspired the Revolution. They were Puritan guns whose echo is endless upon Bunker Hill. It was the Puritan spirit that spoke in the Declaration of Independence. It was the Puritan will that shook the glittering hand of the Cavalier Burgoyne from the Hudson. It was to the Puritan idea that Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown; and, eighty-three years later, it was the Cavalier who again surrendered to the Puritan under the Appomattox apple-tree. Those stern, sad men in peaked hats, who prayed in camp and despised love-locks, and at whom fribbles in politics laugh and sneer to-day, were the indomitable vanguard of moral and political freedom. If they snuffed in prayer, they smote in fight; if they sang through

their noses, the hymn they chanted was liberty ; if they aimed at a divine monarchy, they have founded the freest, the most enlightened, the most prosperous, the most powerful republic in history.

As we look back to-day upon that tremendous conflict, we see, emerging from the bitter smoke, the grim champion of the people—Oliver Cromwell ; and by his side there rides a sturdy Puritan, Major-General Robert Sedgwick. When Cromwell became Protector, he sent his general as commissioner to Jamaica, and, when the king returned, the Puritan decided to remain in America. “E’en in our ashes live their wonted fires,” and, more than a century after Naseby and Worcester, a descendant of Robert Sedgwick, a major in the Revolutionary army, defended the good old cause at Valley Forge. At the end of the war he was made a major-general of militia, and his house, which the Connecticut Tories had burned while he was away, was rebuilt for him by his townsmen. It was in the little town of Cornwall, in the pleasant valley of the Housatonic, in the northwest part of Connecticut—the State of Putnam and of Wooster—and there his grandson—our General John—was born, on the 13th of September, 1813. He is remembered as a quiet farmer’s boy, going to the common school, and working in the peaceful fields of Cornwall Hollow—a generous, manly lad, a natural leader among his companions. But the spirit of the Ironside trooper and of the Continental volunteer was in his blood, and as a little boy he called himself “General John Sedgwick.”

Thus, a soldier, born of soldiers, on the 1st of July,

1833, when he was twenty years old, he came here to the Military Academy, where, three years later, he was graduated, and was promoted second lieutenant of the Second Artillery. He served immediately in the Florida war against the Indians; a little later, upon the Northern frontier, during the Canadian border troubles, and was engaged in recruiting at various stations. Thirty years ago the profession of arms in this country did not seem to be very alluring; but it is very much to those whom it did allure that we owe our national existence. This academy, indeed, is accused of aristocratic tendencies, of educating a class of men in a republic, not to be self-respecting and thoughtful citizens, but deaf and dumb and blind instruments merely. If the charge be true, it is fatal to West Point. If West Point be a machine, in which those born and bound to be moral and responsible men and citizens are ground into slaves, then it is the most pernicious and perilous of all institutions in the country. For why has a large standing army always been considered the curse of liberty and the enemy of civilization? Because a king and a ministry depend upon it to defy reason, humanity, justice, and common-sense. Because the army was regarded as a vast, insensate trip-hammer, and the king, plus the trip-hammer, might pulverize the people at his pleasure. But the moment the trip-hammer begins to think, that moment the hand of tyranny is relaxed and the people are relieved.

A republic is possible only among thinking men. In a republic, therefore, political interest and power are not a privilege of the few; they are the imperative duty

of all. Every man need not be a skilled politician, but no man has a right permanently to seclude himself from knowledge and interest in public affairs. The only hope for all is in the general intelligence and the general conscience, and there can be no general knowledge if individual men and classes are willing to be ignorant. Therefore it is that, in this country, while every man is true to the conditions of the republic, there is no need of a huge standing army, for the great body of the citizens is the army. The arms they bear, in Kossuth's phrase, are bayonets that think, and the officers whom they professionally educate are no more justified in renouncing the fundamental duties of citizens than are the rest of the people. The American citizen who, under the plea that he is a soldier, excuses himself from political responsibility and duty, betrays his country. Eighty years ago, when the French Guards refused to fire upon the people of Paris, Charles Fox said that the French had abolished the fear of a standing army, because they had shown that in becoming a soldier a man remained a citizen. A storm of reproach followed his words; but, if the spirit of them be not true, a soldier is the most contemptible of men. Discipline and obedience, indeed, are indispensable to military service; but when the position of any honorable man anywhere requires him to do what seems to him unjust, mean, wicked, he will resign his position and retain his manly honor. In your name, gentlemen, and in your presence, here in the school in which our officers are trained, I deny that to become a soldier is to cease to be a citizen and a man. I deny that a soldier is a moral



monster for whom right and wrong do not exist. I deny that in a noble breast, whether in or out of uniform, the sense of loyalty to the flag will be deeper and stronger than that of loyalty to conscience and to manhood. And if our own heaven-born Stars and Stripes should ever become the black flag of infamy and injustice, it is an insult to you, as to your fellow-citizens, to suppose that you or they would imagine it to be an honorable duty to bear it. We are citizens of the world before we are citizens of any country: we are men before we are Americans—*ubi libertas, ibi patria*—and our duty as Americans is to make America the home of noble men, and that flag the flag of liberty for mankind.

In our late war, it was not the resignation of their commissions by those who felt, however mistakenly in our judgment, that they could not honestly fight under the flag, which cast so deep an odium upon them. It was not the conscience, it was the want of conscience. It was not the honest conviction, it was the treachery that was so despicable. If Benedict Arnold, whose name is so tragically associated with this spot, had honestly resigned his commission, the consequence might, for a time, have been deplorable, but his name would not be infamous. It was the treachery that dooms him to eternal execration. It was not Twiggs's wish to leave the army, it was his base surrender of men and material that blackens his name. It was not the resignation of Lee that forever marks him, it was his following the flag which he confessed he saw no reason for unrolling. The condemnation of all the

West-Pointers who resigned was not of the soldiers, but of the men. It was that they obeyed the authority of States, which they said they held to be paramount, when that authority ordered them to raise the flag of injustice and inhumanity. If it be said that a soldier must obey commands, whatever they may be, I reply that no honorable man will remain for a moment in a position which demands dishonor. If King Herod orders his officer to slay all infants under two years of age, he will refuse longer to be an officer of Herod's, and, if every officer did so, Herod's murders would be left undone. "I have ever had in my mind," said Algernon Sydney, "that when God should cast me into such a condition as that I cannot save my life but by doing an indecent thing, he shows me the time has arrived wherein I should resign it"; and when that time came he did resign it. He did not say, "My king orders it, my State commands it"; he said, "My conscience forbids it," and he died.

But the records of the academy show that the officers educated here had not merged the man in the soldier. They had retained and exercised the duties of citizens. West Point, at least, had not made them machines; and let the tree be judged by its fruit. In the month of June, 1861, there were eight hundred and twenty living graduates of West Point; from the slave States there were three hundred and eleven, of whom one hundred and thirty-three refused to follow the fortunes of their States. Add, to those who resigned or were dismissed, ten from the free States, and, of the whole eight hundred and twenty, only one hundred and

ninety-seven renounced the flag of the Union. "Nearly four fifths of its graduate officers remained faithful," says General Cullum, in his "Biographical Register" of West Point; "one half of those from the South stood firm by the Stars and Stripes, and in the battles for the Union one fifth of those engaged laid down their lives; more than one third, and probably one half, were wounded." If the rebellion in the interest of the aristocracy was officered by West-Pointers, so was the people's army of the Union; and if the military chief of the rebellion had been superintendent of this academy, he surrendered to the military chief of the Union, who had been its pupil.

At the end of the Revolution General Washington was made President, not only for his military renown, but for those qualities which the people knew that they could trust in the civil administration of the republic. Washington, as President, recommended the establishment of this academy; and when, after the fierce but triumphant struggle to save, upon the true principles of the republic, the government and the Union which he founded, those who have succeeded look to find a successor of his whose character and career promise an administration which will secure peace with liberty and honor, their eyes, their hearts, and their hopes turn to a graduate of West Point.

It is not possible, and you will not expect, that I should trace our soldier step by step in his career. Before the late war, his services were those of the officers of his time, and he rose by brave and brilliant conduct in the field and faithful duty out of it until

the spring of 1861, which found him major of the First Cavalry, and engaged in the building of Fort Wise, near Pike's Peak, in Colorado. From this remote retirement the shot at Sumter brought him into the constant and conspicuous service in which the brief remainder of his life was passed. In March, 1861, he was lieutenant-colonel of the Second Cavalry; in April, colonel of the First; in August he was appointed, in the place of Robert Edmund Lee, colonel of the Fourth Cavalry, and in the same month brigadier-general of volunteers, serving in the defences of Washington and along the Potomac in Maryland. When the Virginia Peninsula campaign opened, John Sedgwick was a division commander, and his story to his death is that of the Army of the Potomac.

See how the story opened, for it ended as it began. After the battle of Williamsburg, the first considerable action was that of Fair Oaks and Seven Pines.\* The mass of the Union army lay upon the eastern side of the Chickahominy, and two corps, counting about thirty thousand men, were upon the other shore. A furious storm in the night promised to swell the river to an impassable flood, and in the morning the whole rebel force bore down upon the Union lines to annihilate one wing of the army in full sound and sight of their brothers, hopelessly separated from them. All the morning the battle hotly raged; the Union troops were slowly, slowly, driven back. By noon the river began to rise. General Sumner, who was upon the eastern

\* May 31-June 1, 1862.

shore, and in whose corps General Sedgwick commanded a division, was ordered to cross, and he sent word to Sedgwick, the "always ready," as General Scott used to call him, to advance; but, as Sedgwick came towards the bridge, he saw that the river had become a sea, sweeping fiercely by. Far out in the midst of the waves a plank, apparently anchored, showed the channel; beyond the further end of the plank the waters stretched for a quarter of a mile. It was a perilous task to feel his way through the water with a heavy battery of twenty-four guns, and then to trust a frail, trembling plank for the passage of the channel. But the smoke and roar of the battle beyond the flood came nearer, and he knew that his brethren were sorely pressed. After a calm, thoughtful survey, he gave the word "Forward." Into the waters moved the steady line; the gun-carriages sank almost to the guns, floundered, staggered. But, painfully dragging on, soldiers and batteries crossed the quivering bridge, which was whirled away as they left it. Toiling again through the swift water and the mire, an hour and a half before sunset Sedgwick came upon the field. The rebels, flushed with success, were driving their victorious columns as a wedge between the centre and the right of our wavering forces; but, like his Ironside ancestor, Sedgwick swiftly advanced, formed his line, opened his batteries, and shattered the wedge. The wasted foe recoiled before his tremendous fire, his whole division, in blazing line of battle, moved steadily on, seized the stricken enemy, hurled him into the woods, and the battle of Fair Oaks was won.

On the 4th of July, 1862, Sedgwick was made major-general of volunteers. In all that great army, struggling in the slimy toils of the Peninsula, there was no officer more trusted and beloved than this most unobtrusive man, this almost ideal American soldier. In person not tall, with dark hair, dark, almost still eyes, with the tranquil aspect of reserved power; a man who did not talk much or loudly, but who was always gayly chaffing his associates; who was smilingly suspicious of newspaper fame and never went to Washington; a man of iron will, promptly obedient, and therefore requiring exact obedience; in council clear and swift, in action every faculty nimbly alive, his powers intensely concentrated, his soul glowing with eager purpose, as at a white heat, but not mastered either by victory or defeat—he had all the cardinal soldierly qualities, the positive masculine, manly traits, but with them that depth of tenderness and sweet humor which complete the finest natures. One night a young officer of his staff whom he tenderly loved had been absent at a merry-making, and, losing his way homeward, did not return until after daybreak. As he entered, the general, who had feared some mischance to his friend, with a severe air said inquiringly, “Well, sir?” The young officer, grieved with the apparent censure of the tone, began eagerly to explain; but the general’s face softened with inexpressible affection, and rising, this man, who never knew wife or child, with a father’s fondness laid his hand upon the young man’s shoulder and quietly kissed him.

Simple in his habits, and of a rustic modesty of manner, Sedgwick’s humor played pleasantly over every



event. Sitting one day at headquarters, in plain undress, a Yankee soldier sauntered up and said, "Say, old fellow, do you live here about headquarters? Can you do a fellow a good turn?" "I cannot exactly say," replied the general, "until I know what it is." "I want an order on the commissary for a canteen of whiskey for some friends who have come over to see me." "Well," said the general, "the commissary is a friend of mine, and you can try what friendship will do," and he wrote a few words on the back of a letter, folded it, and handed it to the soldier. The man looked at it, and when he saw at the bottom, "John Sedgwick," he raised his wondering and abashed eyes in silent confusion, folded the paper carefully, and put it in his pocket. The commissary never saw it, but doubtless some wife or child or mother or sweetheart cherishes the story and the paper, and loves the memory of John Sedgwick.

This was the man whom, early on the morning of the battle of Antietam,\* we see advancing in line under a terrible fire through the famous bloody corn-field already won and lost. Ricketts and Meade had driven the rebels back, and in their turn had been overwhelmed. Hooker had demanded of Doubleday his best brigade, and, joining it to the line that Hartsuff led, once more the fiery rebel mass recoiled. Mansfield had fallen; Hartsuff was wounded; Hooker himself was wounded, and as he retired the rebels threw fresh men upon the field. These Sedgwick encountered. His orders were to advance, but

\* September 17, 1862.

his quick eye saw at once the imminent danger, for the supporting division was too far away. He moved partly by the flank to cover the gap, but the enemy saw it also and dashed swiftly in. Sedgwick's ranks wavered; they were shattered. Struck by a bullet in the leg, and again in the wrist, pale, and dripping with his own blood, he rode among his soldiers, while the hurricane of fire and death devoured them, and his mighty will strove to reform his melting columns and hold the enemy at bay; but in the midst a third shot struck him, and he was borne insensible from the field. He rejoined the army on December 22, 1862, and on February 5, 1863, John Sedgwick was placed in command of the Sixth Corps. It had loved its old commanders—Generals Franklin and "Baldy" Smith—and it received a new leader coolly; but brave men love a hero, and when the story of Fair Oaks, of Seven Pines, of Antietam, came thrilling from the warm hearts of Sedgwick's old division of the Second Corps to the willing ears of the Sixth, the Sixth, hearing what its new general had been, knew what he would be, and the corps and the general soon proved each other's quality.

When General Hooker decided upon the movement at Chancellorsville, Sedgwick, with his own corps, twenty-two thousand strong, and General Gibbon's division of the Second Corps, six thousand strong, crossed the Rappahannock two or three miles below Fredericksburg. He was ordered to advance towards Chancellorsville, fall upon the rebel rear simultaneously with Hooker in front, and so destroy the rebel army. At three in the morning, under a bright moon, Sedgwick began his march; the



enemy immediately opened fire, and at daylight Sedgwick, fighting his way, was entering Fredericksburg instead of Chancellorsville. His advance was impeded by the enemy intrenched upon Marye Heights, and after disposing his men and planting his guns, Sedgwick gave the order to assault.\* Forward went Newton's Second Division, jubilant and resistless, like a great, glittering wave, and swept straight over the hostile works. Then pressing on with his own corps, leaving Gibbon at Fredericksburg, General Sedgwick met the enemy at Salem Church. Meanwhile Lee had baffled Hooker, and with a constantly increasing force stayed Sedgwick's advance. All night the Sixth Corps lay upon their arms; Hooker was no longer an obstacle to the rebel chief, and, with the full force of his victorious army, Lee turned, struck Sedgwick in the flank, and the Sixth Corps, which had achieved a success so splendid upon that tragical field, was enveloped in the general disaster of the army.

As the Sixth Corps marched from battle to battle, from the heights of Fredericksburg towards the hills of Gettysburg, the indomitable will of the general urged the men so ardently that they called themselves "Sedgwick's Cavalry," and declared they were kept upon the gallop. They said he only halted when his horse gave out, and when he stopped every day to watch from the roadside the passing columns, the men shouted good-humoredly from the ranks, "Get another horse and come on; we'll wait for you, Uncle John; we're

\* May 3, 1863.

in no hurry, Uncle John;" and if the general smiled, the shout became a laugh, which broke along the ranks and echoed from companies and rippled along regiments, until whole divisions rang with the loud response of merriment to "Uncle John's" kind smile. But it was a weary march to Pennsylvania in the frowning early summer of 1863, and the eve of the battle of Gettysburg\* brought a despatch from General Meade, which found General Sedgwick just gone into camp after a hard day's toil. But he saw what must be done, and at nine o'clock at night his columns began the march.

All through the hot July night, after a weary day, and at a quick step, they pushed manfully on—brave boys who helped to save a nation. Sedgwick was never more aroused. His unconquerable will nerved and moved the long ranks of his army as the force of the ocean urges the waves. If his generals suggested that there must be some rest or the corps would straggle, he replied shortly, "Have you seen Meade's order?" When the corps made a brief halt for breakfast he ate nothing, but passed constantly among the troops, then gave the order to advance; and when one of his officers was three minutes late in moving, the general exclaimed, "Tell him if he is so tardy again I will—" but no threat reached the trusty lieutenant, and none was meant; but the distant thunder of the great battle even then announced the struggle, and the untiring leader, his soldierly soul aflame, knew that his

\* July 2, 1863.



absence might lose the day. This Ironside fervor again inspired the men, and at two o'clock, foot-sore, staggering, weary, having marched thirty miles since nine o'clock the evening before, the columns of the Sixth Corps came upon the memorable field. They were exhausted and held in reserve; but so sharp and furious was the struggle that their aid was constantly demanded, and Sedgwick sent brigade after brigade of those indomitable soldiers, who stayed the rebel onsets, and so had their glorious part in the crowning field of Gettysburg, that drove armed rebellion from the loyal States, and gave the true heart of patriotism an exulting faith in final victory.

Before going into winter quarters, the army forced the passage of the Rappahannock at Rappahannock Station. The enemy was intrenched upon the hither side of the river. Against this position Sedgwick led the Fifth and Sixth Corps, under instructions to push the enemy across that day.\* Until sunset the artillery thundered in vain. Then General Wright, commanding the Sixth Corps, directed General Russell to carry the position by infantry assault; and Russell, leading through the fiery hail from the rifle-pits, through the smoke and roar and dust of the storm of battle, his frail and silent and unfaltering line, advanced steadily across that dreadful field into the "jaws of Death, into the mouth of Hell," and never spoke until the bayonets clashed, and then his word was "Surrender"; and as the enemy crumbled and fled, the "boys in blue" rent

\* November 7, 1863.

the air with three triumphant Yankee cheers, and "Uncle John" knew that his trusty children of the Sixth Corps had done it.

In the following winter, during the illness of General Meade, General Sedgwick commanded the Army of the Potomac. The winter wearing away, the most ample preparation was made for the operations of the year, and with the opening spring the lieutenant-general commanding the armies of the United States began the last campaign against the rebellion. You, gentlemen, helped to make the history which I describe—the famous story at which the world still wonders, with which the loyal heart of the country beats forever grateful.

But before we mark the individual part of Sedgwick in that great campaign, let us see it as a whole. On April 30, 1865, President Lincoln wrote to Lieutenant-General Grant, "And now, with a brave army and a just cause, may God sustain you." And, indeed, if the names of those who win battles that save civilization are dear to the heart of man, how cherished will be that of the taciturn, tenacious soldier, whom nothing could shake off from success! Neither the tool of political tricksters nor the dupe of his own ambition, he showed himself, in the final campaign, the true type of American genius in action. Grimly in earnest, he knew that war is not conciliation, and that the rebellion was to be suppressed, and suppressed only, by the destruction of rebel life and rebel supplies. He knew that he could better lose a hundred lives than the rebellion could lose fifty; and he knew also that terrible sacrifice was the least bloody road to peace. Breaking up on the Rap-



idan, early in May, he forced his fiery way through the Wilderness—and was called a butcher. By terrible blows he drove the enemy, by swift and silent marches he flanked him—and was called a blunderer. By one of the most masterly and daring of military movements his resistless will threw his whole army over the James, and forced the enemy into his capital—and he was called incapable. The roses of June faded, and the victory was not won. The bells of the fourth of July died away, and the victory was not won. The auxiliary operations in the Shenandoah failed; those to the south of Richmond miscarried; public impatience grew, and passionate doubt and despondency clouded the summer. “Will he do it?” asked, in whispers, the lovers of liberty. “He’ll do no more,” shouted the exultant friends of the rebellion. They did not know the man. They did not remember Vicksburg; they did not remember Chattanooga. “I shall fight it out on this line, if it takes all summer,” was the only reply. It did take all summer. It took all winter. But he fought it out, and followed that line to victory.

Undismayed by delay, undisturbed by impatience, holding Richmond in both hands, he ordered Thomas to annihilate Hood—and he did it. He ordered Terry to take Fort Fisher—and he took it. He ordered Sheridan to sweep the Shenandoah—and he scoured it clean. And Sherman—where was he? Suddenly the thick cloud of loyal doubts and fears and of rebel rumors parted, and revealed Sherman sauntering through Georgia, eating turkeys and sweet potatoes. Like a gnat, Wade Hampton hovered upon his path, trying to sting,

and was brushed away. A gust of Wheeler's cavalry blew off Kilpatrick's hat. Fort McAllister crumbled at Sherman's touch. Hardee stole from Savannah like a thief in the night. The terror of Sherman's presence a hundred miles away emptied Charleston of rebel troops, as, when a huge craft passes in the river, the waters recede from the distant lands. Across Georgia, across South Carolina, into North Carolina, he moved unopposed, spreading his terrible wings, and scourging the land with fire. Then, with the accumulated force of fragments, Johnston dashed against one of his arms at Bentonville. Sherman threw him prostrate in the dust with one hand, and stretched out the other to grasp that of his great commander on the James. The silent captain by the river, still holding his antagonist fast in his capital, had now shown, by the end of March, that the army of that antagonist was the rebellion, and he prepared to strike. At the extreme left of his line the sting of the swift and fiery Sheridan struck the enemy first. He winced and suddenly recoiled. But sharper grew the sting, swifter and more fiery, until the word came, "Sheridan is sweeping all before him from the West!" Then the genius of the great captain, seconded by the tireless valor of his soldiers, lightened all along the line, struck everywhere at once, burst over the enemy's works, crushed his ranks, forced his retreat, and at the same moment the master, loosening his victorious columns in pursuit, checked the rebel flight, and overwhelmed Lee and his army as the Red Sea engulfed Pharaoh and his host. So opened and closed the great campaign. So the Army of the Potomac,

often baffled, struck an immortal blow, and gave the right hand of heroic fellowship to their brethren of the West. So the silent captain, when all his lieutenants had secured their separate fame, put on the crown of victory and ended civil war.

But with what mournful and pitying eyes did Liberty survey her triumph, bought, as all her great triumphs have been, with tears and blood and heart-break! How truly sang her poet, amid the ghastly tempest of battle,

"We wait beneath the furnace blast  
The pangs of transformation.  
Not painlessly doth God recast  
And mould anew the nation!"

From the happy homes among the hills and valleys, upon the seaside and the prairie, three hundred thousand brave and beloved had marched to the field and returned no more. Him, also, whom your hearts recall, whom his country remembers, who fondly said, as he stood at his door, looking out upon the soft Housatonic landscape, "Is there another spot on earth so beautiful as Cornwall Hollow?" him, also, the green fields of Cornwall Hollow should behold no more.

Emerging from the Wilderness, on May 9, 1864, the army was concentrated around Spottsylvania Courthouse, General Sedgwick and his corps holding the left of the line. It was Monday morning, and the general was watching his men place the guns. He was sitting under a tree, talking with General MacMahon, his adjutant-general and warm personal friend, one of the young heroes whom the war discovered and developed, and whose brilliant service and rapid promotion showed



how wisely Sedgwick chose his men.\* The general was speaking proudly and tenderly of his staff and his corps, when, observing some mistake in the work of his men, he said abruptly, "That's wrong." He and his adjutant were together, and as they moved towards the working parties the rebel sharpshooters began to fire. The soldiers dodged as the bullets whistled. "Come, come, men," said the general, smiling; "dodging for single bullets! Why, they couldn't hit an elephant at this distance." "Ah, general," said one of the men from behind a tree, "I've tried it, and I believe in dodging." "Very well, my man," said Sedgwick, "go to your place; but I tell you they can't hit an elephant here." He turned, still smiling, to continue the conversation with his adjutant, who, at the instant, heard the sharp, low, singing sound of a bullet ending dully, and Sedgwick sank slowly to the ground. His friend MacMahon vainly tried to support him. He bent over him, and spoke to him with passionate eagerness; but Sedgwick did not answer. His eyes were closed; his hands were clasped; the sweet smile lingered upon his face. A little blood trickled down the cheek from beneath the left eye. His heart beat gently for a moment—and was still.

The country heard of his death as of the loss of an army. It was concealed from his soldiers, lest they should be unnerved in battle. Then from the sylvan bower in the old woods of Spottsylvania, in which he

\* I am much indebted to a biographical sketch of General Sedgwick written by General MacMahon immediately after the death of his friend, *G. W. C.*



was tenderly laid that morning, Connecticut, remembering Putnam and Wooster; Connecticut, mother of the Grants and the Shermans, of Ellsworth, Winthrop, Ward, and Lyon; who had sent her children to every famous field of the war—received, with love and sorrow, and with perpetual proud remembrance, the dead body of John Sedgwick. On the Sunday after he fell, borne by his neighbors, amid the tears of silent thousands, and wrapped in the flag, he was buried in Cornwall Hollow. No military salute was fired above his grave; but one solitary peal of distant thunder sublimely suggested the soldier's life and death.

Sedgwick died, but the victory was won. What was the victory? It was twofold. First, it was the revelation of an overpowering national instinct as the foundation of the Union. It dissipated old theories; it interpreted the Constitution. Plant a homogeneous people under one government along the coast of a virgin continent; let them gradually overspread it to the farther sea, speaking the same language, virtually of the same religious faith, intermarrying, and cherishing common heroic traditions; suppose them sweeping from end to end of their vast domain without passports, the physical perils of their increasing extent constantly modified by science, steam and the telegraph making Maine and Oregon neighbors, their trade enormous, their prosperity a miracle, their commonwealth of unsurpassed power and importance in the world, and you may theorize of divided sovereignty as you will, but you have supposed an imperial nation which may indeed be a power of evil as well as of good, but which, until it is fatally demoral-

ized, can no more recede into its original elements and local sources than this abounding river, pouring broad and resistless to the sea, can turn backward to the petty forest springs and rills whence it flows. "No, no," murmurs the exultant river; "when you can take the blue out of the sky; when you can steal heat from fire; when you can strip splendor from the morning, then, and not before, may you reclaim your separate drops in me." "Yes, yes, my river," answers the Union, "you speak for me. I am no more a child, but a man; no longer a confederacy, but a nation. The States are the members; I am the body. I am no more New York, Virginia, Massachusetts, Carolina; I am the United States of America, one and indivisible." "Amen," roar Vicksburg and Gettysburg and Port Royal. "Amen," thunders the *Kearsarge*, as she sinks the *Alabama*. "Amen," sings Sherman, as he marches to the sea. "Amen," says Sedgwick, as he sinks dead at Spottsylvania.

But the victory was more than that. A great nation may be a great curse to humanity. An imperial flag may be a black flag of injustice. It is not great power, it is the great use of power that is admirable. The true triumph of the war is not that the Union shall henceforth be an undivided power merely, but that it shall be an undivided power of justice and equality. Of the two forces that from the first have struggled for its control, the evil principle, finding that, by all the laws of Heaven and of human welfare, it was failing, sought to ruin what it could not rule. Baffled in its bloody effort, let us now take care, with



malice towards none, with charity for all, that it be baffled forever. But this can be done only by ceaseless activity. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, because its foe is as crafty as it is cruel. Beaten in one form, it will try another. The magician who was a tiger yesterday will be a fox to-day. Sedgwick died to preserve the integrity of the Union; we live that we may secure its justice. From the three hundred thousand who see not this peaceful autumn sun, from field and river, from mount and sea, from the blood in the streets of Baltimore, from the torture and despair of Andersonville, from Fort Wagner and Fort Pillow, from all your heroic fields, men of the Sixth Corps, from the Wilderness and Spottsylvania, and from your brothers who are buried there, comes the glorious cry: "We conquered under the flag of the Union, the flag that promised liberty. We won our victory and died. See that you die rather than surrender it."

Officers and soldiers of the Sixth Corps, for the last time you stand here together, and before parting, never as a corps to meet again, your hands and hearts that, with his, beat back the cruel flames of war—here upon the spot he knew so well, in tender memory of him, and in bond of faithful union among yourselves, raise this statue to the brave and gentle Sedgwick. It is wrought of cannon that, with his eye watching you and his heart trusting you, you captured in the blazing fury of battle. It is a monument of your valor as well as of his devotion. His modesty would have refused it for himself, but his affection would have accepted it from you. Here leave it, under the sky and

among the hills. Upon this soldier's field it shall out-watch, at its silent post, the sentinels of to-day, the sentinels of coming years. This noble pageant, this living multitude, these spoken words, this roar of cannon, these peals of echoing music, shall pass away; but thou, mute soldier, shalt remain! Thy lips shall speak when we are gone. And to the young and docile hearts that, through long years hereafter, shall hither come to give themselves to the service of the flag, say, changeless lips, for us, say for America, say for mankind, "That flag is the flag of liberty and justice, and therefore the flag of peace!"



II

THE SOLDIERS' MONUMENT

AN ORATION DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION OF THE  
SOLDIERS' MONUMENT, AT PITTSFIELD, MASS.,  
SEPTEMBER 24, 1872

The inscription upon one of the faces of the Soldiers' Monument at Pittsfield tells its story :

WITH GRATEFUL RECOGNITION  
OF THE SERVICES OF ALL HER  
SONS  
WHO UPHELD THE HONOR AND  
INTEGRITY OF OUR BELOVED  
COUNTRY  
IN HER HOUR OF PERIL,  
THE TOWN OF  
PITTSFIELD  
ERECTS THIS MONUMENT IN  
LOVING MEMORY OF THOSE  
WHO DIED THAT THE  
NATION  
MIGHT LIVE.

The monument consists of a pillar of granite, supporting the figure, in bronze, of a color-sergeant holding the flag.  
The statue was designed by Mr. Launt Thompson.

## THE SOLDIERS' MONUMENT AT PITTSFIELD, MASS.

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OUR hostile bugles long since sang truce, and this wind of September sighs through the untrampled grass of Gettysburg and of Shiloh. The great armies of the war have melted into the greater hosts of peace. The old familiar habits of life have been long resumed. The wheels of industry turn, the factory hums, the scythe sings in the fields, and the laborer no longer recalls the comrade who enlisted yesterday, nor hears the voice of heroic duty calling him to battle. Spring cheers the shaggy sides of Greylock with rose-laurel and anemone; the bobolink tumbles in melodious ecstasy in the meadows of the Housatonic; the robin and the bluebird whistle in the branching elms of the Berkshire valley: and all these glad sights and sounds of nature are no longer shadowed by the awful cloud of war. How suddenly at last that black cloud gathered, and how swiftly, its fury spent, it seemed to disappear! One incident typifies the whole. During the last days before Richmond, the Secretary of War went, with a friend, to the front. One morning they were sitting in an ambulance, quietly talking with General Grant, who was seated upon



his horse, and who, by his almost rustic plainness, modesty, and simplicity, and the sturdy look of fighting-it-out-on-this-line-if-it-takes-all-summer, well personified the people who had made up their minds to victory. The ambulance was standing at the foot of a steep road just at the edge of a little bridge, from which, at the other end, it again arose steeply and wound rapidly out of sight. As they were tranquilly talking they heard a loud noise, and saw that an army team had broken loose, and wagon and horses were rushing madly down the hill at the other end of the bridge, and would apparently be upon the ambulance before it could escape. Instantly General Grant had turned his horse, had cleared the bridge, and riding straight towards the wild horses, he seized one of the leaders by the head, and, violently turning him, changed the direction of their flight so that the whole team fell headlong down the bank, rolling into the river. The general then quietly trotted back again across the bridge and resumed his conversation. Such was the attitude of the country, tranquilly engaged in peaceful intercourse, when suddenly it saw swift destruction apparently upon it. But in a moment it had sprung to the rescue, boldly grappled with the peril, and with a stout heart and steady hand had thrown it headlong into helpless ruin, and then turned quietly back again to its peaceful occupation. How fresh the story is, yet already how remote! Every faithful State, every town and village, has its traditions and its heroes. And already we can see that the fiery and bloody hands of war that tore our hearts and saddened the land were yet, by God's grace, hands of benediction.

The tale of Pittsfield in the late war was what it was in the Revolution, a tale which every parent will proudly tell and which the latest generation will gladly hear. I need but to refer to it, for it has been told with grace and skill and fidelity by one of your own townsmen,\* and is still new and still inspiring in your memories. "The popular rage is very high in Berkshire," wrote the English Governor Gage, a hundred years ago. The population of Pittsfield was less than nine hundred, but it was afire with patriotism. The Pittsfield pulpit rang with the gospel of independence. The people were poor, but they had sent six pounds, twelve shillings, lawful money, for the relief of the sufferers by the Boston port-bill. They were far inland, over the hills, but the nerves of patriotism are electric, and annihilate space, and on September 1, 1774, an alarm swept through the State that the British troops were firing upon the Sons of Liberty, near Boston. The next morning fifty thousand Massachusetts men were on the march to defend or to avenge their brethren, and among them Captain David Noble's company of minute-men marched from Pittsfield. It was a false alarm, and the company went only as far as Westfield. But Captain Noble knew that every alarm would not be false. He, therefore, sold two farms; took the money and went to Philadelphia; bought some buckskin and some blue and white cloth; hired a breeches maker; brought him and the buckskin home to Pittsfield; made up the breeches and

\* "History of Pittsfield," by J. E. A. Smith.



the coats in his own house, gave them to his company with a hundred and thirty muskets, and awaited the summons which he knew must come. At noon, on April 21, 1775, it came. The echo of Lexington and Concord rang like a tocsin through the State, and at sunrise the next morning the buckskin breeches, blue coats, and Continental muskets were on their way to Bunker Hill and independence. Meanwhile Pittsfield had sent John Brown to the first Provincial Congress—John Brown, a name of good omen in the history of liberty; and, as the result proved in 1861, the soul of the Pittsfield John Brown had been marching steadily on among these hills for a century, and still kept step to the music of liberty to which Captain Noble's minute-men marched to glory.

In January, 1861, Governor Andrew—John A. Andrew, whose name Massachusetts will hereafter canonize with the names of Hancock, of Warren, of Quincy, of Otis, and of Adams—issued an order as commander-in-chief of the military forces of the commonwealth, to discharge all men in the militia of the State who were unable or unwilling to respond to any call of the President for instant service. Governor Andrew, like Captain Noble, knew that every alarm would not be false, and made ready for war. The Allen Guard of Pittsfield, or Company A of the First Battalion, by a vote of forty-two of the forty-three members present at the meeting, immediately resolved that one of the objects of the organization was to preserve the rights and privileges transmitted by our patriotic forefathers, and further resolved that they were ready to defend them.

John Brown of the Provincial Congress, and Captain Noble of the revolutionary minute-men, might have drawn the resolutions. They made the Allen Guard also virtually minute-men, who kept themselves ready, by constant drilling, for the call which at last came on April 15, 1861. Governor Andrew had not meant to draw any of the troops, which he was first to send, from western Massachusetts, as the call was pressing. But Captain Briggs of the Allen Guard, a lawyer, who was then in Boston trying a case in court, hearing that the 8th Regiment wanted two companies, went to the governor, told him that Pittsfield was ready, and asked that his company might be taken. The governor, who gladly saw that all Massachusetts was ready, promptly accepted the offer, and by this chance Pittsfield was the only town in the western part of the State which contributed a company to the first contingent of troops which Massachusetts sent to the war.

On the evening of April 17, 1861, only four days to the date upon which, eighty-six years before, the news of the battle of Lexington reached the town, Captain Briggs telegraphed the order for his company to report the next evening at Springfield and join the regiment on its way to the field. Then Pittsfield saw the sight over which the sun shone everywhere in those glorious, those immortal days. The richer citizens instantly assembled, and subscribed for the aid of the soldiers and of such of their families as might be in need. But what that meant we had not yet learned. At noon, on the



18th of April, the church-bells rang—the people gathered in the town-hall, and, thanking the soldiers for their prompt and patriotic action, resolved that their families should be the care of the town. At a little past six o'clock in the evening, as the sun was setting, the Guard, seventy-eight men strong, marched to the railway station. Hope, fear, pride, exaltation, heart-break, passionate enthusiasm, followed them as they went; and, amid pealing music and a tempest of shouting, they left for Springfield just twenty-three hours after the order came, and thus Captain Briggs's minute-men in 1861 were off in a little shorter time than Captain Noble's in 1775.

The 8th Regiment reached Philadelphia on the evening of the 19th of April, and early the next morning the Allen Guard of Pittsfield and the Salem Zouaves were aroused for active duty. War had begun, and Massachusetts soldiers were the first victims slain in Baltimore. "I pray you," telegraphed the governor of Massachusetts to the mayor of Baltimore, in that grave, manly, moderate tone which Lincoln and Andrew and the great Union leaders never lost, "I pray you to cause the bodies of our Massachusetts soldiers dead in Baltimore to be laid out, preserved in ice, and tenderly sent forward by express to me." The telegraph wires northward from that city had been cut, and it was the intention of the enemy to seize the Susquehanna Ferry at Havre-de-Grace, thus interrupting the chief line of communication with the North. This plan was to be frustrated, or the ferry-boats to be recaptured if already taken. As the troops approached the river, Captain

Briggs told his men that, as he and Lieutenant Richardson proposed to lead the attacking party, they must borrow two muskets, and the lenders would, of course, be relieved from taking part in the fight. He waited, but there was no response. No Pittsfield soldier wished to be relieved of the duty or to escape the danger. The captain, obliged to decide, looked along his men, and seeing a bright-eyed boy of seventeen, to whom he would gladly spare the peril of battle, offered to take his musket. But, as he stretched out his hand for it, the young soldier, with tears in his eyes and clinging to his piece, exclaimed, "Captain, I came here to fight, and I can't give up my musket."

So Pittsfield went into the war. The soldiers recruited here served in the Massachusetts 2d, 8th, 10th, 20th, 21st, 27th, 31st, 34th, 37th, the 49th, which was entirely a Berkshire regiment; the 54th, the first colored regiment, the heroes of Fort Wagner; the 57th and 61st; the 1st, 3d, and 5th regiments of cavalry, and the 2d battery of light artillery. It was the major of the 49th, Charles T. Plunkett, who volunteered to lead the forlorn hope in the desperate assault at Port Hudson. He pleaded that he had no family to suffer by his fall, while the officer to whom the post of honor and of danger had been assigned had a wife and children. But that officer declined to yield, led the hopeless attack, and was killed upon the field. I am telling you an old story. I am repeating to you familiar traditions. You know that Pittsfield served in all parts of the country, and in every campaign except Sherman's march to the sea. In the Army of the Potomac, in the valley of the



Shenandoah, at New Orleans, and in the Army of the Gulf, in Carolina, in Tennessee, Pittsfield marched in the front, and its watchword was always that of its youngest soldier going into his first battle, "Captain, I came here to fight, and I can't give up my musket."

Gone are the armies. Silent is the roar of battle. Healed are the wounds of the living. Green are the graves of the dead. And in grateful memory of all your neighbors and townsmen who fought or fell, we come to unveil the statue which shall tell when we are silent the splendid story of their deeds. Indeed, the sculptor's mind and heart and hand, working in full sympathy, have so felicitously united, in this changeless figure, a grace of youthful strength, a lofty hope, an indomitable will, that he has wrought at once a statue of the cause and of those who fought and died for it. For even so those brave sons of yours who stood in the storm of battle saw high above the strife the genius of the young land they fought for, erect with immortal hope, heroic, firm, serene; holding the flag of stars as the emblem of its pure resolve. *Ad astra, per aspera.* This the hearts of those men fighting saw. For nothing less than this, for a country of which the faith and generosity of youth should be the perpetual inspiration, they died, and for no other should they have been willing to die. Stranger from other lands, would you comprehend our war, its sublime purpose, its sacred heroism? Then study this statue long and well, and you will understand the American soldier of Union and Liberty.

Freshly to preserve the memory of great events and of noble men is to cherish the greatness of the State,

and to inspire noble citizenship. The history of his country stimulates every young patriot to make that country still worthier the love of her children. *Noblesse oblige*, says the old proverb. The son of nobles must be noble. The youth who is bred in the ancient halls of his race, hung with the portraits of heroic ancestors, is inspired to deserve his descent by being himself a hero. The figure of Cromwell standing among the English kings is not the executioner of Charles I.; it is the living genius of Liberty, to Englishmen. And Greenough's statue of Washington at the national capital, with one hand holding the empty sword-sheath, and the other pointing to the sky, as it faces the halls in which Congress sits, says forever to every American senator and representative, "The freedom that this sword won, only the justice of Heaven can preserve." So the soldiers' monuments of the late war, happily arising in every town and in every village, with the beautiful rites of Decoration Day hallowing the memory of heroes, are like springs of liberty flowing everywhere in the land. Here, and now, in this benignant shade, we open another. Hither let the young and old repair, and drink deep of sacred memories! For the duty of this hour, and of every hour, is to remember. Experience is the torch by which the world sees its way, and no wise man ever forgets, however freely he may forgive. The war of the Rebellion should no more be forgotten than the war of the Revolution. Its animosities indeed, its personal and sectional hostilities and alienations, cannot soon enough be buried. But upon our side we may truly say that there was never vindictive feeling, nor



have we ever pursued a policy of revenge. The cause that triumphed was not a sectional advantage. The result was not the victory of the North over the South. It was the triumph of the American principle of republican liberty over its enemies everywhere—in the North as well as in the South—in Europe as well as in America. When we fought, we fought a universal battle. We fought for freedom everywhere. When Sherman marched to the sea, he captured sneering London and plotting Paris; and European doubt and contempt are buried forever under the Appomattox apple-tree.

The victory which this monument commemorates solved one of the great problems of politics. It showed that a popular government is both the strongest and most flexible in history. There had been republican States before. In the very heart of Europe, the little Swiss cantons of Uri and Appenzell are the purest democracies in the world—States in which all the adult male inhabitants personally take part in the government. They have existed for centuries, but they have existed only by the sufferance of royal and imperial neighbors. But here was a continental republic of vast extent and of various races, and with no army but its own equal citizens. Europe did not deny our dull tranquillity, our monotonous prosperity. "But it is not," she said, "the result of your political system. It is the consequence of happy chance and of circumstances. You are far from other nations; you have plenty of room; you are freed from the problems which vex every old and crowded country. But your bond of union has never been tested. The force of your national instinct is

unknown. Your vessel swings securely upon a summer sea, but it is the tempest that tries us all." At last the tempest burst upon us, and a republican government was proved to be neither violent nor cruel nor impatient; but fixed in purpose, faithful to its own officers, tolerant of vast expense, of enormous losses, of torturing delays, and strongest at the very points where fatal weakness was most suspected. "If you put a million of men under arms," said Europe, "you will end like all republics, in a military despotism." And within six months of the last parade of the armies of the West and of the East through Washington, an English gentleman was in a huge warehouse in Chicago, surrounded by scores of clerks engaged with merchandise and accounts. "But did you go on so through the war?" asked the Englishman. "Oh, no, sir," answered one of the clerks; "that young man was a corporal; that one nailing up a box was a lieutenant: that one carrying a roll of goods was a major; the book-keeper yonder was a colonel; and I, sir, I was a general, at your service." "Indeed!" said the Englishman. And all Europe, looking across the sea at the same spectacle, magnified by hundreds of thousands of citizens quietly re-absorbed in their various pursuits, echoed his astonished exclamation—"Indeed!" For it saw that the great army, which for four years shook the continent with its march and countermarch, was not what armies had always been, the machine of a government to manage the people: it was the people managing themselves; it was the Yankee constable going his rounds.

Thus our war won victories that we did not see. The



pool in which the stone is dropped pulses in ripples to its farthest shore. The word spoken, or the arm raised, moves the air in endless undulations. The chord vigorously struck makes the distant, silent harp vibrate in harmony. So our war not only conquered that ancient scepticism of the republic, but woke to melody the hope of liberty all over the world. A United States ship sailed once into the harbor of Naples, and the king and a glittering party of noblemen came off to visit her. To the honest Yankee sailor eyes, which could see no other sign of royalty than gold lace, one laced man was as much of a king as another. And as one of the royal party upon the deck tripped and disappeared, a sailor stepped up to an officer and, touching his hat with a grin, said briefly, "Please, sir, one of them 'ere kings has tumbled down the hatchway." So, when General Lee surrendered the broken sword of slavery to General Grant, all of them 'ere kings tumbled down the hatchway. I say then that our monument does not commemorate the victory of the North over the South, but the triumph of the essential principle of a republic over all its enemies, both at home and abroad. The struggle was, indeed, a civil war, but so was that of the Revolution. Our fathers stood only upon English principles. James Otis, the fiery tongue of the early Revolution, and John Adams, its sagacious brain, pleaded only English precedents. If England conquers the colonies, said Lord Chatham, she falls upon her own sword; and the Tory Governor Hutchinson said that, in order to govern the colonies peacefully, "there must be an abridgment of what we call

English liberties." When Paul Revere rode up to Concord, rousing Middlesex as he went, and Captain Noble and his buckskins started from Pittsfield, they were Englishmen hurrying to defend English rights; and at Lexington, at Saratoga, at Trenton, at King's Mountain, our fathers were Englishmen defending England against herself. Let us not be ashamed of the blood from which we sprang, nor of the mother language that we speak. The great traditions of freedom, the great muniments of popular liberty, both the germs and the guards of future civilization, descend to us through England. The road is straight from Runnymede to Bunker Hill. Israel Putnam behind the earthworks saying, "Boys, don't fire till you see the whites of their eyes!" was a better Englishman than Lord Percy leading his scarlet-coated troops against those terrible farmers. At last, on the plains of Yorktown, the baser England surrendered to the better, and the England of Alfred and of Wickliffe, of John Hampden and of John Milton, conquered the England of the Stuarts and of slavery. The noblest and wisest of Englishmen gladly own it to-day, and share the fruits of victory. When in 1832 the minister of the king said to the peers, "Gentlemen, if you do not pass the reform-bill, his majesty will swamp your house," it was because his majesty's father had been unable to swamp the colonies. The English reform-bill was an American crop from Bunker Hill. And if to-day our mother England, as one of the most radical of Englishmen asserts, is virtually a republic, it is because she tried in vain to wrong her daughter in America. The statues



of the Revolutionary fathers, the monuments of Revolutionary battle-fields, therefore, foster no unkindly feeling between the countries. The thoughtful Englishman stands upon those fields and says to his American brother, "It was a common victory; England was saved against her will." The great-grandson of George III. stands reverently with bare head at the tomb of Washington; and in these very days England bows at Geneva and says, "I admit it. I will pay. I suffered the *Alabama* to escape"—and England acquiesces because the heart of England knows that when the British Parliament cheered the escape of the *Alabama*, it cheered a ship whose guns were shotted to the muzzle against English principles and English civilization.

So will it be with the monuments and the statues of the later war. They, too, commemorate a common victory. They tell the triumph of freedom, justice, and equal rights, and no triumph could be so truly American, so precious to every State and to every section. For many and many a year there must be bitterness of feeling in the Southern States. Slowly the false political and social theories from which the war sprang will disappear. They will not be renounced, but they will be outgrown. Often and often there will be outbreaks of lawlessness, like sudden lightnings from a spent storm-cloud. As the nobleman of the old French régime could never be reconciled to the Revolution, as the English Jacobite fervently pledged "the king over the water," and prayed with tears for his return, so, to many of the present generation in the Southern States, the lost cause will long be a fond and despairing ideal.

I know that the air rings with the cry of reconciliation, but let us not deceive ourselves. The South of the past will never be reconciled or forgive its defeat. But the South of the future is already reconciled with equality and justice. Amid the generous influences of the new Union, the old South will hold itself apart like a glacier in the ocean. Cold, towering, apparently as eternal as the sea itself, that glittering mountain, floating icily aloof, at last touching the Gulf Stream, begins to dissolve. Down come flashing pinnacle and peak frosty spire and shining cliff. Like a living monster of shifting tints, a huge chameleon of the sea, the vast mass silently rolls and plunges and shrinks, and at last utterly disappears in that inexorable warmth of water.

That is the spectacle which we behold. The icy mountain is melting away. We cannot indeed trust it. We cannot build upon it. But before our eyes it disappears. Patience, then, patience! We have only to be firm, with malice towards none, with charity for all, doing justice and maintaining equality, and the children of the gray-coats will at last agree that defeat was victory. They will see and own that nothing is so American as the equal union of all for the equal liberty of all. At last they will see and agree that a great nation, founded upon the equal rights of all its people, constantly enlarging and aspiring, reaching from the coast to the mountains, running over the mountains and across the plains of sunset to the Pacific sea, bound in one vast brotherhood of justice and intelligence and industry, is better for them, for us, for the world, than a puny group of States whose bond is human slavery, and



which stands alone and helpless amid the contempt and horror of mankind. On some bright day hereafter, in some soft September sunshine that we shall never see, some Georgian or Carolinian youth strolling beneath these trees with a New England comrade, will pause before this statue, and gaze long and tenderly upon the manly face of that young hero. And, not forgetting his own kindred who fell upon the other side and who sleep beneath the Southern sun, "I see it now," that generous youth will say; "the men of whom this figure is the fit memorial fought and died for me as well as for you. They saved Carolina as well as Massachusetts. For what would Carolina have been, what would the Union be, without equal liberty? Soldier in blue! you were not the soldier of the North, of a section, of a party; you were the soldier of the whole American people, of its deepest instinct, of its highest hope. And Florida and Georgia, Carolina and Virginia, lift up their free hands to heaven and bless God for the victory you won."

That victory was twofold. It was political and moral. Its great political result is easily defined. The war interpreted the Constitution. Those four tremendous years were the proof that the peril of our system is not its centripetal, but its centrifugal forces. In a union of States like ours, the general intelligence and the political instincts of our race will always check any dangerous centralization. The fear of consolidation, however, of the absorption of the State governments by the general government, was felt by many of the fathers. But whatever obscurity they left upon this point in the con-

stitution, the war has forever dispelled. It has decided that we are not a league, nor a confederacy, nor an agency, but a republican nation. A nation in which the equal rights of every citizen are the sacred care of the whole people. A nation whose unity does not depend upon the whim of any State nor of any majority in any section; whose government is not, as Jefferson called it, a "department of foreign affairs," but the national authority of the sovereign people of the country. Emerging from the thunder-cloud of war, sad and weary, bloody and triumphant, the nation exclaims, "I am not New York, Virginia, Massachusetts, Carolina. I am the United States of America, one and indivisible. If anywhere upon my domain any citizen of mine, however poor, humble, and forsaken, is touched by the lightest finger of injustice or injury, and his neighbors will not protect him, and the local courts and the local law refuse to aid him, *I* will defend him," says the new Union born of the war.

This is the political result of the war, but greater than this is its moral result. We, men and women of this generation, have been taught what Jefferson meant when he said, "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just." In the convention that framed the Constitution, George Mason, a friend and neighbor of Jefferson, exclaimed, "By an inscrutable chain of causes and effects, Providence punishes national sins by national calamities." John Rutledge of South Carolina replied, "Oh, no, gentlemen; religion and humanity have nothing to do with the question. Interest is the governing principle with nations." With that creed we began.



Our earlier statesmen assented. "In this world," they said, "we must compromise. Compromise is the very essence of government." They forgot to ask what are the natural limitations of compromise. Questions of cotton and corn you may compromise, but not a point of conscience. Moral principles are absolute and eternal. You may stretch an inch of India-rubber to cover your hat—you cannot stretch a diamond the shadow of a hair. But we thought we had done it. Our astounding prosperity deceived us. Europe swarmed to our shores. Our population doubled every fifteen years; our wealth every ten years. Our boundless domain promised plenty to endless generations. Forests fell; factories hummed; gold glistened in every man's pocket. Science knit oceans together, and brought the lakes to the gulf. The government was a ceremony, except to one race. It was never felt in taxes. It was a beautiful central symbol only. And still prosperity magnificently multiplied itself, and the words of John Rutledge seemed to have become the faith of the country: "Religion and humanity have nothing to do with the question."

Do you recall the Greek legend of the Lamia, the beautiful woman who feasted the wits of Athens? As they sat, crowned with flowers, they pledged her beauty in golden cups brimming with wine like molten rubies. "Beautiful, beautiful Lamia!" sang the intoxicated chorus. But the philosopher who sat among them fixed his relentless eyes upon her, and gazed and gazed, until she rose from the table indignant. Proudly, with dazzling beauty she defied him. "Beautiful,

beautiful Lamia!" sang the intoxicated chorus. But still the relentless eyes gazed upon her, until at last, shrinking and wavering, the beautiful form dwindled and drooped and changed, and, sinking to the floor, glided away before their eyes, a loathsome serpent. So the conscience of this country fixed its terrible eyes upon that prosperity. But it swelled with conscious pride. "Look at our power, look at our progress, look at our population! Who shall molest or make us afraid?" it cried in eloquent ecstasy. "Beautiful, beautiful Lamia!"—and, suddenly, that false prosperity tottered, withered, and sank, dissolving into the awful coils of civil war. States of the South, that quivered with the terrible tread of Sherman—States of the North, the flower of whose homes was smitten—was not John Rutledge wrong, was not George Mason right, that prosperity which is not honesty, humanity, and justice, is as fair and false as the Lamia?

The perception of this truth is the priceless moral result of the war. And it is well that we have learned it in the first century of the national life. Great power, vast extent, enormous wealth, do not make a great nation. Greatness of thought, greatness of soul, alone make a great State. This is no longer the whim of theorists, nor the dream of the closet; it is the hardest fact in our experience. Every dollar that we pay in our war-taxes enforces the truth. Every sleeve empty of an arm, but full of glory and honor; every crutch on which the maimed soldier limps, but upon which justice steps more securely, reminds us that national greatness is a moral, not a financial fact, and that



the richest country upon the globe may be the most unstable. Remembering this, if we shape accordingly our foreign and domestic policy, all the cost and suffering of the war will have been a price well paid. Forgetting this, the abolition of slavery, the fortification of the power of the national government, all the visible results of the war, will be in vain.

There are those, I know, who think that we have escaped the gangrene of slavery only to sink in the slough of corruption. A great civil war, they think, is always followed by peculiar evils and dangers, and the situation of the country has developed them with frightful rapidity into perilous proportions. Force, they say, breeds fraud, and in all our public affairs, since the war, audacious dishonesty runs riot. Undoubtedly, there has been a reaction from the patriotic fervor of ten years ago. The war has left evil results which all good men deplore. But party, which is always distempered, can never truly depict the situation. There has been reaction. But as the ocean, receding after a mighty flood-tide, leaves upon the beach sand and slime and shapeless monsters of the deep, yet leaves also pearls and shells and precious blossoms of the sea, so the war has not been followed by such general demoralization as is alleged. It has, indeed, left political confusion and ignorance and knavery. It has left the Ku-Klux and the hatred of race and the spirit of caste. But these are transitory evils, to be corrected by taking care that they do not control the government. Beneath and beyond them the war has left us a knowledge of our political system such as we never had before; a

general sense of political duty hitherto unknown among us; a purer patriotism, and a clearer sense of the relation of morals and politics. In the old dark days before the war, the Tammany ring in New York could not have been peacefully broken. Public sentiment, demoralized by the apparently hopeless supremacy of slavery, would never have nerved itself to the struggle. But the war had so cleared the public perception that such an evil could only end in fearful disaster if it were not arrested, that the great city and State rose, and gained without a blow one of the greatest victories in our history. Let those who think that the public conscience has been weakened by the war, that we are losing sight of all just principles of government, that we are enamoured of the sword, reflect that a nobler civil triumph was never won than that which emancipated the great State and city of this continent from the despotism of the ring; that the forced retirement of Cardozo, and the removal of Barnard from the supreme bench of New York, and his ineligibility to all offices of honor, trust, or profit in that State forever, are signs of a public virtue such as this generation has not known; and that in this generation spotless personal character was never so indispensable an element of political success in this country as at this moment. If we have lost something, we have gained more. If the war has multiplied opportunities of fraud, it has quickened our perception of its danger. Materially and morally the country was never more hopeful, never fuller of promise, than now. Once more our statistics dazzle the world. During the last decade, including the war, our manufactures trebled. In the



Southern States the number of farms has increased one third. Although the public debt is very great, being about sixty dollars to every inhabitant, yet the industry, skill, and enterprise of the country are paying it so rapidly that, at the rate of payment for the last three or four years, the debt, if desirable, would be wholly paid in twenty years. But we have learned that such facts may be only a magnificent mirage. This statue and the soldiers' monuments all over the land are set to ask us, at every hour of the day and of the night, Do we respect liberty and its safeguards? Is equality safe? Is the government in the hands of those who have proved, not of those who have professed, their love of justice?

But, from the cause which the monument commemorates, our thoughts are drawn by the occasion to the men who won the victory. For what makes a State? Not laws, nor systems, nor institutions, nor traditions, nor vast extent, but men; and men in the true sense, that is, men of moral nerve, of sobriety, of intelligence, of industry, of honesty. The key of history is morality. God is on the side of the strong battalions, said Napoleon. But it is not numbers that make strength. When William the Conqueror crossed the Channel to England, he carried sixty thousand Normans with him. All night before the battle of Hastings the Saxons ate and drank and rioted; all night the Normans "tried to enlist God upon their side." The battle began, and at sunset sixty thousand Normans had conquered two millions of Saxons. They gave literature, art, and progress to England, and refined

the character of a race. So, in the late European war, it was not only that Germany had more soldiers than France that she was victorious, but because the German bayonets, in Kossuth's phrase, were bayonets that think. This was the secret. The educated Germans made better soldiers. The triumph of Germany was a moral victory. It was not cannon and powder and shells—it was character, human quality, that won. Eloquence, says Emerson, is that speech in which there is a man behind every word. Victorious war, says history, is that contest in which intelligence and morality serve the guns.

And how rich was our war in these personal qualities! How profound the influence of this statue in showing us that the heroic excellence of human character which we associate with the past, and suppose to be the exclusive property of tradition and poetry, are of our own age and country as much as of any other! We read Plutarch until our imaginations flame with the Grecian story. The trophies of Miltiades will not let us sleep. History and poetry and heroic legend make the names of Marathon and of Salamis, of Thermopylæ and Platea, names of unrivalled glory. Pericles, Themistocles, Alcibiades, Demosthenes, Timoleon, stand in our fancies proudly aloof and superior, reproving the meanness of later men and the bitterness of modern times. But our own history is not less heroic. The mighty torrent of Asiatic barbarism that threatened for a time to sweep away Grecian civilization was not more formidable than that which threatened American liberty. If the statesmen and the heroes who stayed that earlier desolation, and the fields on which their battles were fought, are



renowned and precious to Americans to-day, how much more our own fields and our own brothers! Xerxes sent a herald to Leonidas, ordering him to give up his armies. "Let him come and take them," said Leonidas, and for a whole summer day he held all Asia at bay at Thermopylæ. "Surrender! Surrender!" cried a rebel leader to the commander of a Union company in Missouri, cut off from the main body. "Not much," replied the Union captain, and he won the victory.

The war has taught us that the poetry of heroism is in the deed, not in the distance. The brave youth seems a poetic hero when we see him, three hundred years ago, called Philip Sidney, riding into the fight against the Spaniards on a misty morning, upon the Isel. Suddenly he sees his friend Lord Willoughby surrounded and sorely pressed, and Sir Philip, dashing to the rescue, is shot and mortally wounded. Borne fainting upon his horse from the field he asks for water. But, as it is brought to him and he is raising it to his lips, he sees the eyes of a dying soldier fixed upon it with passionate longing. Then, leaning from the saddle, the gentleman of gentlemen, the flower of English manhood, hands the cup to the soldier, and the dying hero whispers to his dying comrade, "Friend, thy necessity is yet greater than mine." History will never tire of the beautiful story. But, more than three hundred years later, a gunner at Gettysburg falls, mortally wounded, by his gun, which is sorely pressed by the enemy. The battle rages on, and, tortured by thirst, the dying man says to his comrade, serving the gun alone, "Johnny, Johnny, for the love of God give

me a drop of water." "Ah, Jamie," says his comrade, "there's not a drop in my canteen, and if I go to fetch it the rebs will have the gun." "No matter, then, Johnny; stick to your gun," is the answer, and when, after a desperate struggle, with a ringing shout of victory the line moves forward, it is over Jamie's dead body. Does it need three hundred years to make that self-sacrifice as beautiful as Sidney's? Jamie is not less a hero than the Englishman, and the brave Sidney clasps his hand in Paradise. The past was a good time, but the present is a better. Themistocles standing upon his galley and driving the enemy at Salamis, the image of Greek valor in the war with Persia, is not a nobler figure than Farragut lashed into the maintop of the old *Hartford* at Mobile, the image of American liberty in the war with slavery. When Timoleon, the patriot general of Corinth, freed Sicily, the citizens of Syracuse put even the wives and daughters of the opposing general to death. When General Grant, by his final victory, secured the emancipation of a race and the perpetuity of the Union, he spared the enemy every humiliation, and would not even enter their capital, while in the same great spirit his fellow-citizens forbore to shed one drop of blood. The shadow of a political scaffold has never stained the land; and to-day, with the exception of the ineligibility to office of some two hundred persons—a disability which the same wise and humane policy will soon sweep away—the laws of the United States rest with perfect equality upon every part of the land.

Let us be grateful for Greece two thousand years



ago, and thank God that we live in America to-day! The war scattered the glamour of the past, and showed us that we, too, live among great virtues, great characters, and great men. Through these streets the culture of Greece, the heroism of Rome, the patriotism of our own Revolution, have marched before your eyes. These elms, like the trees of Ardennes, have shed their tears in dew-drops over the unreturning brave. The ground upon which we stand is consecrated by the tread of feet gladly going to the noblest sacrifice. And from these throbbing drums and wailing horns still peals the music to which they marched away. They were your sons, Pittsfield and green Berkshire! They were your comrades, Massachusetts soldiers! They were the darlings of your homes, tender hearts that hear me! And here, in this fair figure of heroic youth, they stand as you will always recall them—the bloom of immortal youth upon their cheeks; the divine hope of youth in their hearts; the perpetual inspiration of youth to every beholder. For this is the American soldier of the Union; the messenger of liberty to the captive and of peace to the nation. This is the perpetual but silent preacher of the gospel of liberty and justice as the only sure foundation of States. "Beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth peace, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

III

THE SOCIETY OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

AN ORATION DELIVERED AT THE NINETEENTH ANNUAL RE-

UNION OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, HELD AT

GETTYSBURG, PA., ON JULY 3, 1888

At the eighteenth Reunion of the Society of the Army of the Potomac, held at Saratoga Springs, N. Y., in June, 1887, it was—

*Resolved*, That the committee representing this Society be instructed to tender to the survivors of the Army of Northern Virginia our cordial invitation to take part with us in the battle-field reunion of July, 1888, so that the survivors of both armies may on that occasion record in friendship and fraternity the sentiments of good-will, loyalty, and patriotism which now happily unite us all in sincere devotion to our beloved country.

The invitation was extended to the soldiers of the South, and received a cordial acceptance; but, in consequence of the failure of Congress to grant an appropriation of \$25,000, solicited by the representatives of the Society, adequate provision could not be made for the comfort of the Southern guests, and the attendance was small. But those who were present were representative of the great body of the Southern army, and the spirit which prevailed among the assembly on both sides was one of mutual confidence and good-will, and of common patriotic sentiment. The proceedings were throughout of interest. They began on July 1st. On July 3d the following oration was delivered.

THE  
SOCIETY OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

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UPON this field, consecrated by American valor, we meet to consecrate ourselves to American union. In this hallowed ground lie buried not only brave soldiers slain in battle, but the passions of war, the jealousies of sections, and the bitter root of all our national differences—human slavery. Here long and angry controversies of political dogma, of material interest, and of local pride and tradition came to their decisive struggle. As the fate of Christendom was determined at Tours, that of American independence at Saratoga, and that of modern Europe at Waterloo, the destiny of the American Union was decided at Gettysburg. A hundred other famous fields there are of the same American bravery in the same tremendous strife; fields whose proud and terrible tale history and song will never tire of telling. But it is here that the struggle touched its highest point. Here broke the fiery crest of that invading wave of war. From this field the civil contest, through renowned campaigns of courageous endurance, of fearful carnage, and of accumulating heart-break for Northern and Southern homes, slowly receded towards



its end. This, therefore, is one of the historic fields of the world, and to us Americans no other has an interest so profound. Marathon and Arbela, Worcester and Valmy, even our own Saratoga and Yorktown, fields of undying fame, have not for us a significance so vital and so beneficent as this field of Gettysburg.

As we see it to-day beneath this summer sun, it is a happy valley of golden harvest fields, of stately woods, of teeming orchards, of glistening waters, and of cheerful homes. Beyond those airy walls of mountain stretches westward to the Sierras and the Pacific, northward to the Lakes, southward to the Gulf of Mexico, and eastward to the Atlantic, the continental empire of an industrious and fraternal people. Its great aspects, its characteristic features, are all unchanged. Over it beam the benignant heavens, upon its broad and beautiful expanse lies the benediction of peace. From the day when the pioneers first reached it on their western way, on through the gradual development of civilization and its transformation by tranquil industry from a wilderness to a garden, it had been the happy valley that we behold, secluded from the world, until revealed in a sudden blaze of glory, with its heights and slopes and meadows—Seminary Ridge, Culp's Hill and Wolf's Hill, Round Top, Little Round Top, the Peach Orchard, the Wheat Field, and Cemetery Hill—all caught up into immortal remembrance.

In that fierce light this noble landscape rises at once into history and becomes dear to the human heart. Around its chief and central interest gather associations of felicitous significance, as if the divine Providence

delighted to enrich a spot so fair in itself, so precious in its story, with kindred memories. Like the House of Delegates in Williamsburg, where Patrick Henry roused Virginia to resistance; like Faneuil Hall in Boston, where Samuel Adams lifted New England to independence; like Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia, where the Continental Congress assembled, this field is invested with the undying charm of famous words fitly spoken. While yet the echoes of the battle might have seemed to linger in the awed and grieving air, while far beyond the Potomac the hostile armies still lay encamped and the final issue of the war was veiled, stood the sad and patient and devoted man, whose burden was greater than that of any man of his generation, and as greatly borne as any solemn responsibility in human history—the man from whom no disappointment, nor calumny, nor defeat, nor calamitous disaster could extort an unkind or ungenerous word of a single foe—the man who said of the Southern soldiers when the war began that, like their opponents, they “are American citizens, with essentially the same characteristics and powers; exceptional advantages on one side are counterbalanced by exceptional advantages on the other. We must make up our minds that, man for man, the soldier from the South will be a match for the soldier from the North, and *vice versa*.” By a singular fortune, like Washington through both parents a son of Virginia, he shares with Washington the affectionate gratitude of his country. Upon this field he spoke the few simple words which enshrine the significance of the great controversy, and which have become a part of this historic scene, to



endure with the memory of Gettysburg, and to touch the heart and exalt the hope of every American from the Gulf to the Lakes and from ocean to ocean, so long as this valley shall smile with spring and glow with autumn, and day and night and seed-time and harvest shall not fail.

Already he had said, with the pathetic yearning of a true American heart, while the war was imminent, but had not yet begun: "We are not enemies, but friends; we must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic cords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature." To-day his prophetic vision is fulfilled. The murmur of these hosts of peace encamped upon this field of war, this universal voice of friendly greeting and congratulation, these cheers of the Gray echoing the cheers of the Blue, what are they but the answering music of those chords of memory; the swelling chorus of the Union responding to the better angels of our nature? If there be joy in heaven this day, it is in the heart of Abraham Lincoln as he looks down upon *this* field of Gettysburg.

But the occasion has yet another profound interest of association. It was on the 21st and 25th of June, 1788, that the votes of New Hampshire and Virginia decided the adoption of the Constitution of the United States. This year, almost this very day,



is its centenary, and nowhere in the country could the glorious anniversary be celebrated with such perfect propriety as upon the field where, by the majestic decision of forces from which there is no appeal, the Constitution was decreed to be an imperishable bond of national union and liberty. Like all enduring political instruments, the Constitution was not, as Mr. Gladstone's phrase would imply, an inspiration, in the sense of a work struck out at once completely fitted for its purpose. It was not an inspiration, but a development. It was the result of actual experiment. It was founded upon the experience of self-governing British colonies, embodying the ancient muniments of English liberty and the traditional distribution of political power. The whole constitutional scheme had been already tested in simple political communities. The distinction of the Constitution is the application of that scheme, not to another simple political society, but to the creation of one of the most composite political communities ever known, a successful system of complete double citizenship. It transformed a congress of colonies into a nation of States.

It was as united colonies that, on the "haughty day" of which to-morrow is the one hundred and twelfth anniversary, the American people declared their independence of Great Britain. But twelve years later the sentiment of State independence—a condition which, strictly speaking, had never existed, as the colonies were united in the crown—had become so jealous that, in devising the new Constitution, much was left obscure. Notwithstanding this opportunity of

various interpretations, however, so strong was State feeling that, except for the confidence of America in Washington, the most sagacious observers of the time doubted if the Constitution would have been adopted. Besides the obscurity, there were compromises indispensable to its formation, but the scope, the operation, and the consequences of which no human wisdom could forecast. More than all else, two things completely eluded anticipation or calculation. One was the sectional development of slavery, which compelled the important compromises of the Constitution. At that time it seemed to be a passing cloud of controversy, but it was destined to overshadow the land, and to burst in an awful tempest of wrath and fire and blood. The other was the sentiment of nationality, as yet uncertain and vague, but which, springing from homogeneity of race, language, religion, and political tradition, was destined to grow with the marvellous material development of the country, with the ease and simplicity of popular government, and with the passion and pride of an English-speaking people, until the Union would become not so much an ingenious political contrivance as the ark of the covenant, the sacred shrine of the deepest instinct of the American heart.

In all these conditions lay the final causes of the civil war. In one view it was a war of constitutional vindication; in another, of constitutional interpretation. But in any view it was an inevitable war, if ever such a phrase may be used. Conflicting convictions, interests, passions, were all so absolute, so complicated, so powerful, so defiant, that, however the lover of peace and



of the mild sway of reason may deplore the tragedy, it was forecast in the nature of man. The issue at stake was ostensibly the nature and vitality of a great political union. But beneath and beyond lay the problem of a social and industrial system, inextricably involved by the compromises of the Constitution with the national conscience and the national life. It was a war without precedent for the grandeur of its significance, for the vastness of its resources, and for the stern tenacity of its combatants. It was a contest, not of regular armies nor of mercenary levies to gratify dynastic ambition or to extend ruthless conquest, but of republican citizens, self-organized into military hosts to maintain conflicting principles held with equal sincerity and defended with equal courage. Only American valor could hope successfully to assail American union, and nothing but the same valor could successfully maintain it. Yet even that heroic devotion alone might not have withstood the fiery onset of an equally resolute political conviction. But when union became identical in the minds of its defenders with human liberty and human welfare, then the stars in their courses, the hopes and prayers of mankind, fought for the Union; and even if the conflict had lasted a hundred years, the final event of the mighty assault upon the Union would have been typified in the last, brave, desperate deed upon this field, upon this day, twenty-five years ago—the steady, stern, magnificent, heroic, hopeless charge of the gallant Pickett.

But, that the glory of this day and of America and of human nature may be full, it is the veterans and

survivors of the armies whose tremendous conflict interpreted the Constitution who to-day, here upon the field of battle and upon its twenty-fifth anniversary, clasp friendly hands of sympathy to salute a common victory. This is a spectacle without precedent in history. No field of the cloth of gold, or of the grounded arms, no splendid scene of the royal adjustment of conquests, the diplomatic settlement of treaties, or the papal incitement of crusades, rivals in moral grandeur and significance this simple pageant. It is not for one who did not bear arms in the strife to attempt to express the emotion which fills the heart of every veteran upon this field at this moment, and which the glowing words of welcome and response that have been already spoken by those whose title to speak is the highest possible, have adequately and elegantly expressed. Nor would you ask of me to repeat to you the details of a battle of which you were the combatants—a battle in which every soldier was a hero, where dauntless courage and sublime resolve contested every step, and where, amid the awful scene, as a thousand fond traditions tell, the truest and tenderest and loftiest qualities of American manhood, in life and in death, were equally displayed.

Twenty-five years ago, soldiers of the Gray, breaking up on the Rappahannock just a month before this day, your hearts beating high with the joy of many victories, your hopes bent upon turning back triumphantly the flood of aggressive war, you eluded the foe, and, crossing the Potomac, moved swiftly forward up the Cumberland Valley, your fires by night flashing against



yonder mountains, your long-stretched lines by day pressing forward, until they hovered around this spot, reaching in sudden incursions even to the Susquehanna, and meditating, in the tranquil heart of a great and prosperous commonwealth, a mighty blow which should shake the capital, dishearten the people, and practically decide the issue of the war. The last sun of June, sinking behind the western mountains, saw your force concentrating yonder to the northwest, perilously near to this little town, and tranquilly awaiting the dawn of a day of anticipated victory. Meanwhile, soldiers of the Blue, long-tried, untiring, and undismayed, marching farther to the east and covering the capital, you moved northward on various lines, uncertain of the point where battle would be offered, but pressing steadily under a burning sun, looking for the foe, undisturbed, although upon your march your commanding general was changed, still pushing on towards the spot which, sheltered hitherto in happy obscurity, was about to be baptized with fire and blood into a fame as wide and everlasting as that of Thermopylæ, and Blenheim, and Bunker Hill.

The sun of Gettysburg rose on the 1st of July and saw the Army of the Gray already advancing in line of battle; the Army of the Blue still hastening eagerly forward and converging to this point. The glory of mid-summer filled this landscape, as if nature had arrayed a fitting scene for a transcendent event. Once more the unquailing lines so long arrayed against each other stood face to face. Once more the inexpressible emotion, mingled of yearning memory, of fond affection, of



dread foreboding, of high hope, of patriotic enthusiasm, and of stern resolve, swept for a moment over thousands of brave hearts, and the next instant the overwhelming storm of battle burst. For three long, proud, immortal days it raged and swayed, drifting from Seminary Hill far around to Wolf's Hill and Culp's Hill, then sweeping back, with desperate fury striking the Peach Orchard, and dashing with flash and roar upon Little Round Top and Round Top, raging in Devil's Den, the earth trembling, the air quivering, the sky obscured; with shouting charge, and rattling volley, and thundering cannonade piling the ground with mangled and bleeding Blue and Gray, the old, the young, but always and everywhere the devoted and the brave. Doubtful the battle hung and paused. Then a formidable bolt of war was forged on yonder wooded height and launched with withering blasts and roar of fire against the foe. It was a living bolt, and sped as if resistless. It reached and touched the flaming line of the embattled Blue. It pierced the line. For one brief moment in the sharp agony of mortal strife it held its own. It was the supreme moment of the peril of the Union. It was the heroic crisis of the war. But the fiery force was spent. In one last, wild, tumultuous struggle brave men dashed headlong against men as brave, and the next moment that awful bolt of daring courage was melted in the fervent heat of an equal valor, and the battle of Gettysburg was fought.

If the rising sun of July 4, 1863, looked upon a sad and unwonted scene, a desolated battle-field, upon which the combatants upon either side had been Amer-

ican citizens, yet those combatants, could they have seen aright, would have hailed that day as more glorious than ever before. For, as the children of Israel beheld Moses descending, amid the clouds and thunder of the sacred mount, bearing the divinely illuminated law; so from that smoking and blood-drenched field, on which all hope of future union might seem to have perished utterly, they would have seen a more perfect Union rising, with the Constitution at last immutably interpreted; and they would have heard, before they were uttered by human lips, the words of which Gettysburg is the immortal pledge to mankind: Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

The sun that set on Gettysburg had not seen, indeed, the end of the war. The army that withdrew from the field maintained from that day a war of defence, but with a skill, a courage, and a persistence which, although they could not summon on either side braver men than fought at Gettysburg, called larger armies to the field and demanded still greater sacrifice. The actual issue was long delayed. But not one army alone determined the result. It was the co-operation of the East and the West which at length prevailed. Here at Gettysburg Meade and his illustrious lieutenants had written their names indelibly in our history. With other fields the famous captains of the last great chief of the war have identified their renown: Sherman, who has outlived all foes and calls every true-hearted American his friend; the silent, noble, generous Thomas; Sheridan, our romantic Murat, our chivalric Rupert,



whose laurels will crown with unfading lustre the memory of the bravest of the brave ; and a great multitude of gallant officers worthy to rank with these and to lead men as dauntless as the men they fought. But by a happy providence it was decreed that the leader of all these leaders and of the united armies should be a patriot with whom, at the head of a million of victorious soldiers, American liberty was as secure as it was with Washington, whose magnanimity was worthy of his country, who, dying, knew no section and no foe, and by whose bier, forecasting the happy day that we behold, walked, mourning and honoring, the lieutenants of Lee, his old foemen in the field. Might a people not justly consider itself the favorite of Heaven which, led by Washington to independence, then torn by angry domestic strife, should find itself brought to perfect and enduring peace, with malice towards none, with charity for all, by the patriotism of Lincoln and the magnanimity of Grant ?

Fellow-Americans, in telling any part of the story of America we seem to boast. The simple statement of the truth sounds like a fairy tale. Yet, could the citizen of any country exalt his land with more reason than we ? What other civilized State stretches from ocean to ocean with such unchallenged continental dominion, with such a varied realm of natural grandeur and beauty, with so vast a population, so free, so intelligent, so industrious, so contented ? In older countries, in the soft air of the storied past, amid accumulated riches of art, and literature, and long and romantic legend, the finest flower of civilization may seem to

bloom. But if civilization mean human welfare, the happiness of the individual man, a fairer opportunity, a nobler ideal, a more equally diffused well-being, then this very year, America, whose true significance is fair play for all men, is the century-plant of civilization, covered with the opening blossoms of a greater general welfare than history records.

Even the civil war has but quickened and deepened our prosperous activities. Like spring-touched mountains of snow melting quietly into the earth, moistening and fructifying the seed eager for the harvest, so those mighty armies of the Blue and the Gray, marshalled for the warfare of a generation, if such had been decreed, swiftly and noiselessly disappeared, and all that military energy and discipline and skill, streaming into a thousand industries, are as beneficent in peace as they were terrible in war. What prouder spectacle is there for America, what vision could more worthily stimulate devout gratitude in every American heart, than that of the States south of the Potomac, which, after the fierce and wasting stress of four years of war upon their soil, after the total overthrow of their ancient industrial system, the destruction of their wealth, the complete paralysis of their business energies, are rising together like a brood of Titans, and under the inspiration of liberty, peace, and assured union are renewing the wonderful tale of the earlier years of the century, the progress and development of the great West? The power and resource of those States in war seem to have revealed to them their unsuspected skill and force in peace. The vigor, the tenacity, the ability,



that contested victory upon this field for those three famous days are now working the greater miracles of industrial enterprise. Never before was the sword beaten into so vast a ploughshare nor the spear into so prodigious a pruning-hook.

The world's imperial deposit of iron has lain dormant for ages between the coal and the limestone of Alabama, but only now has it proved more precious than a gold mine. From the war-desolated wilderness cities have suddenly sprung, humming with workshops and a hundred trades, and startled Pennsylvania hears and wonders, while Alabama and Georgia smile in rivalry, and the flaring furnaces of Tennessee challenge the ancient fires of the Lehigh and the Alleghanies. South Carolina nearly doubles her manufactured products in seven years, and this year they will nearly equal in value all the crops of the State, including rice and cotton. In seven years the assessed valuation of property in the twelve old Southern States has advanced nearly one third, while the rate of taxation is diminished. Thousands of new industries, mining, manufacturing, commercial, and agricultural, arise as in a newly discovered or lately settled land. To facilitate every enterprise, railroads, thoroughly appointed, penetrate the remotest valleys. The watercourses are richly burdened with a freight hitherto unknown, and with new industries greater skill satisfies more various demands, opens wider commercial connections and more intimate social relations, and establishes a higher and more opulent civilization. In all this glittering panorama, the happiest incident is due directly to the war. It is the blending

of the capital, the people, the energy, the experience, the skill and conviction, of other States with those of the Southern States which has produced this great result. Before the war this was impossible. Ever-deepening doubt and angrier divergence had consumed the heart of Union, and only its form remained. This universal confidence and co-operation, therefore, are in the truest sense the fruits of union.

But fairer than all these, as this smile of prosperity broadens over the awakening States, is the fact that labor itself becomes free, and slaves are transformed into citizens. Free labor produces the great Southern staples as amply as before, and is welcomed to the new industries. It pays taxes on property of its own valued at nearly a hundred million dollars, while for the children of former slaves there are nearly twenty thousand schools of every degree, with an enrolment of more than a million of pupils, and everywhere a demand for education, and a public disposition to gratify it hitherto unprecedented. This new birth of freedom is the noblest aspect of the spectacle. The splendor of material progress may easily delude and betray with its fond and flattering caress. But it is not in such details alone that the promise of any people is to be discerned. It is not great mines only, and factories and farms, that make great nations. The patriot looks to see churches and schools and libraries; he studies the decreasing records of crime; he marks the growing respect for common rights, the evidences of public spirit, the moral qualities, the progressive political tendencies and higher standards



of life among a people, before he counts the spindles and the cotton bales, if he would cast aright their horoscope and foretell their future. The appearance of such signs under complicated and unprecedented conditions, conditions which no other States in history ever knew, he sees with hope and pride amid this vast industrial revival. The full fruition, indeed, is not yet. But if some impatient observer, eager that the surely ripening harvest shall be reaped before its golden prime, exclaims angrily that nothing has been done, because so much remains to do, let his answer be that of the wise general to his young lieutenant, who burned for victory and thought the troops too slow: "'Tis an awfully rough road, my boy. Give them time, give them time!"

Not easily nor rapidly can the passions sprung from bitter local differences, and cherished and strengthened for a generation, disappear. Often in hot and reckless protestations those dying emotions will break forth, like the distant muttering thunder of a retiring storm. But the central fact is bright as a fixed star. The line across the Union, drawn by the flaming sword of hostile social and industrial institutions, and irreconcilable theories of the nature and powers of the government itself, this latent revolution and nascent civil war, have disappeared forever. At the end of a hundred years the Union is the sacred, seamless garment of equal rights, of harmonious institutions, of accordant views of the government, in which sixty millions of people in thirty-eight States are invincibly arrayed.

The great question is settled. Other questions, in-

deed, remain which will sternly try our patriotism and our wisdom. But they will be appealed to the ordeal of battle no longer. They will be settled in those peaceful, popular, and parliamentary contentions which befit a patriotic and intelligent republican people. I do not mean only that party politics and measures will be so discussed. I mean that great fundamental questions, like slavery in the last generation—questions of immigration, of citizenship, of administrative reform, of the suffrage; questions of a local bearing and interest, but of a national import and consequence—can be, and henceforth will be, discussed everywhere in the Union. Let me mention as illustrations two of these questions, which are in the highest sense questions of the country and not of party.

The dazzling statistics to which I have alluded outstrip all precedent, but they are not limited to one part of the country. While new Ohios and Pennsylvanias arise in the South, larger, more fertile, more marvellous New Englands appear beyond the Mississippi. The old poets described teeming Sicily as the granary of the world, and it was so for the world they knew. But now for that old world and the boundless new world that we know combined, nothing less than our mighty Northwest can be the granary. Eighty years ago Lewis and Clark toiled through the Western wilderness, from the mouth of the Missouri to the Great Falls, in thirteen months. Now that wilderness is transformed into farms. Distance and time are conquered by endless railroads, the channels of ceaseless torrents of trade and intercourse, pouring through an imperial realm of fabulous



fertility. The spectacle amazes and fascinates the world. The fables of El Dorado are told once more, and the new Atlantis seems risen from the sea. That this land of boundless opportunities is also the home of universal freedom, and that the blessing is to be enjoyed by every comer, begets in every land a hunger for America, and the annals of American immigration almost recall the migrations of ancient races.

The first settlement of the country, two centuries and a half ago, was made in general by tried and worthy pioneers. New England proudly quotes the words of the old Puritan divine, William Stoughton, "God sifted a whole nation that he might send grain over into the wilderness;" and the great commonwealth in which we are now assembled with equal pride venerates its founder, who won his domain by the arts of peace and not of war. But, after the settlement of the country, the current of immigration almost stopped until recent years. Its flood is now greater than ever, but it no longer pours sifted grain upon this continent, but grain mixed with noxious weeds and brambles. Our population is already more heterogeneous than that of any other country. To-morrow is the Fourth of July. It is our national festival. Yet half the population of our greatest city, and vast numbers of the people elsewhere, will have no knowledge of the sublime significance of the day, no kindling pride, no answering enthusiasm, as the Stars and Stripes greet the auspicious morning. This is a fact of profound significance. Only the magic power of the lotus could dull the longing of the Greek heart for Greece. The soul

of the German thrills everywhere to the music of his fatherland. The Irishman is still the exile of Erin. The wandering Savoyard hears in his dreams the *rans des vaches* among his native mountains. The Scotchman, whose land is merged in a mighty empire, is still true to Scotland, and, wherever he wanders, bears in his yearning memory every Scottish legend, song, and hero. Patriotism feeds upon local traditions, historic events, and the memories of famous men. But a miscellaneous multitude, sprung of many nations, without a common heart to vibrate instinctively to common memories and associations, would lack that supreme patriotism which is the moral defence of a nation.

Let us beware, then, how we recklessly water our life-blood. Webster said at Bunker Hill, just as the vast immigration was beginning, "We are placed at the head of representative and popular governments." We shall be recreant to the duty of that headship if we permit the fundamental conditions of national repose, of the security of personal rights, of good laws, and of just administration, to be imperilled by the ignorant, lawless, idle, and dangerous overflow of all other countries. We are the occupants and guardians of this country, and, with a kindly heart and hospitable hand towards all the world, we must prescribe the conditions upon which the world shall come here. If America is to remain the head of free governments and the hope of liberty in the world, our first duty is to remember that constitutional liberty has its own laws and conditions, and that only by respecting and enforcing



them can liberty for ourselves and for all men be preserved.

Akin to this is the problem of the suffrage. Subject to the constitutional guarantee of a republican form of government, and of no discrimination against race or color, the regulation of the suffrage is wisely left to the States. But the action of every State upon subjects of a common interest necessarily affects the Union. The suffrage is the mainspring, the heart, of our common life, and whatever affects it injuriously touches the national sensorium, and the whole country thrills. No community politically founded upon the legal equality of the suffrage can habitually disregard that equality without moral deterioration, growing indifference to the authority of law, and destruction of the democratic-republican principle. If ignorance and semi-barbarous dominance be fatal to civilized communities, not less so is constant and deliberate defiance of law. In a national union of States, where fair elections are assumed, systematic fraud or violence or suppression of votes, in the event of a closely contested poll, would inevitably destroy the conviction that the apparent result represented the actual will of the legal voters, and that result would be challenged amid violent disorder. It is not enough that a national election be fair; it must be the national conviction that it is fair.

No honest man should delude himself with the theory that this is a local question. In New York there is a very large class of ignorant, un-American voters, who barely speak our language, who have no knowledge or

practice of free, popular institutions, and who are alien in tradition, sympathy, and spirit. It is a class of no single nationality, but is gathered from all other lands. It is large enough to control the State, and, as the electoral vote of New York is very important, it might easily decide a national election. But, whatever its ignorance or degradation, this is a class of legal voters. They have been enfranchised by the law upon which rest all our rights; and if by fraud or force, or by any illicit method, this class of voters should be deprived of their legal right, it would not be a New York question alone. Virginia, Mississippi, Maine, Minnesota, would be equally concerned. The national peace would be imperilled until that deprivation ceased, and the right to vote were either legally annulled or freely exercised. If there be a national question, a question which vitally interests every American citizen, from the Penobscot to the Rio Grande, a question which, while Americans are Americans, will not be set aside, but must be honorably entertained and patriotically adjusted, it is the question of a free legal ballot.

The practical remedy for its coercion or its repression, indeed, is local, not national. The citizens of this magnificent commonwealth cannot reach across the Potomac and impose their will respecting the suffrage upon the Mother of States, nor can the States of New England dictate legislation to the States of the Northwest. But the Virginian knows that the Pennsylvanian is vitally interested in his action. Iowa and Wisconsin know that Maine and Rhode Island have a common stake in such local laws; and, as Washington and Pinck-



ney, Jefferson and Madison and Martin, took counsel with Alexander Hamilton and Dr. Franklin and Rufus King and Roger Sherman, bent upon a common purpose, but with due regard to every local condition, so will their sons confer, fraternally forbearing, until the great problem of the suffrage and all other problems are solved. This is the auspicious result which would appear everywhere in the country adjusting the bitterest differences if the spirit of this day and of this field should become the spirit of our politics, and then, by the grace of God, as the essential reason of sectionalism disappeared with the war, its disappearance in fact, in feeling, and in political action would be the crowning glory of Gettysburg.

Fellow-citizens, so far as lies in us, shall not such be the spirit of our political contentions? Can we wrest from the angel of this hour any blessing so priceless as the common resolution that we shall not have come to this consecrated spot only to declare our joy and gratitude, nor only to cherish proud and tender memories, but also to pledge ourselves to union in its sublimest significance? Here at last is its sacred secret revealed. It lies in the patriotic instinct which has brought to this field the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac. It lies in the manly emotion with which the generous soldier sees only the sincerity and the courage of his ancient foe, and scorns suspicion of a lingering enmity. It lies in the perfect freedom of speech and perfect fraternity of spirit which now for three days have glowed in these heroic hearts and echoed in this enchanted air. These are the forces

that assure the future of our beloved country. May they go before us on our mighty march, a pillar of cloud by day, of fire by night. Happy for us, happy for mankind, if we and our children shall comprehend that they are the fundamental conditions of the life of the republic. Then, long hereafter, when, in a country whose vast population covering the continent with a glory of civilization which the imagination cannot forecast, the completed century of the great battle shall be celebrated, the generation which shall gather here in our places will rise up and call us blessed. Then, indeed, the fleeting angel of this hour will have yielded his most precious benediction; and in the field of Gettysburg, as we now behold it, the Blue and the Gray blending in happy harmony like the mingling hues of the summer landscape, we may see the radiant symbol of the triumphant America of our pride, our hope, and our joy.



IV

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF CONCORD  
FIGHT

AN ORATION DELIVERED AT CONCORD, MASS., APRIL 19, 1876



The Centennial Celebration of Concord Fight was worthy of the event which it commemorated. It was no mere local affair, but one in which the nation took part, and in which the chief actors were fit representatives of the nation. The preparations made by the town were ample, and as successfully carried out as they had been judiciously devised. The Hon. E. R. Hoar of Concord, patriot son of a patriot sire, was the President of the Day. The President of the United States—General Grant—the Vice-President, the members of the Cabinet, the Governor, the Executive Council, the Legislature, and the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, the Governors of the other New England States, and many other eminent guests were present. A statue to the memory of the first soldiers of the Revolution, upon the spot where the first order was given to the soldiers of the people to fire upon the soldiers of the king, was dedicated. A brief address was delivered by Mr. Emerson, “grandson of the Concord minister whose counsels and example animated his people in the opening scene of the Revolution.” An ode (now well known to lovers of high-hearted poetry) was recited by Mr. Lowell, and then Mr. Curtis delivered the following oration.

## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF CONCORD FIGHT

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WE are fortunate that we behold this day. The heavens bend benignly over; the earth blossoms with renewed life; and our hearts beat joyfully together with one emotion of filial gratitude and patriotic exultation. Citizens of a great, free, and prosperous country, we come hither to honor the men, our fathers, who, on this spot and upon this day, a hundred years ago, struck the first blow in the contest which made that country independent. Here beneath the hills they trod, by the peaceful river on whose shores they dwelt, amid the fields that they sowed and reaped, proudly recalling their virtue and their valor, we come to tell their story, to try ourselves by their lofty standard to know if we are their worthy children, and, standing reverently where they stood and fought and died, to swear before God and each other, in the words of him upon whom in our day the spirit of the Revolutionary fathers visibly descended, that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

This ancient town, with its neighbors who share its

glory, has never failed fitly to commemorate this great day of its history. Fifty years ago, while some soldiers of the Concord fight were yet living—twenty-five years ago, while still a few venerable survivors lingered—with prayer and eloquence and song you renewed the pious vow. But the last living link with the Revolution has long been broken. Great events and a mightier struggle have absorbed our own generation. Yet we who stand here to-day have a sympathy with the men at the old North Bridge, which those who preceded us here at earlier celebrations could not know. With them war was a name and a tradition. So swift and vast had been the change and the development of the country that the Revolutionary clash of arms was already vague and unreal, and Concord and Lexington seemed to them almost as remote and historic as Arbela and Sempach. When they assembled to celebrate this day, they saw a little group of tottering forms, eyes from which the light was fading, arms nerveless and withered, thin white hairs that fluttered in the wind; they saw a few venerable relics of a vanished age, whose pride was that, before living memory, they had been minute-men of American Independence. But with us how changed! War is no longer a tradition, half romantic and obscure. It has ravaged how many of our homes! it has wrung how many of the hearts before me! North and South we know the pang. Our common liberty is consecrated by a common sorrow. We do not count around us a few feeble veterans of the contest; but we are girt with “a cloud of witnesses.” We are surrounded everywhere by multitudes in the vigor of their prime.

Behold them here to-day, sharing in these pious and peaceful rites—the honored citizens, legislators, magistrates, yes, the Chief Magistrate of the republic—whose glory it is that they were minute-men of American liberty and union. These men of to-day interpret to us with resistless eloquence the men and the times we commemorate. Now, if never before, we understand the Revolution. Now we know the secret of those old hearts and homes. We can measure the sacrifice, the courage, the devotion; for we have seen them all. Green hills of Concord, broad fields of Middlesex, that heard the voice of Hancock and of Adams, you heard, also, the call of Lincoln and of Andrew; and your Ladd and Whitney, your Prescott and Ripley and Melvin, have revealed to us more truly the Davis and the Buttrick, the Hosmer and the Parker, of a hundred years ago.

The story of this old town is the history of New England. It shows us the people and the institutions that have made the American republic. Concord was the first settlement in New England above tide-water. It was planted directly from the mother-country, and was what was called a mother-town, the parent of other settlements throughout the wilderness. It was a military post in King Philip's war; and two hundred years ago—just a century before the minute-men whom we commemorate—the militia of Middlesex were organized as minute-men against the Indians. It is a Concord tradition that, in those stern days, when the farmer tilled these fields at the risk of his life, Mary Shepard, a girl of fifteen, was watching on one of the hills for the savages, while her brothers threshed in the barn. Suddenly



the Indians appeared, slew the brothers, and carried her away. In the night, while the savages slept, she untied a horse which they had stolen, slipped a saddle from under the head of one of her captors, mounted, fled, swam the Nashua River, and rode through the forest home. Mary Shepard was the true ancestor of the Concord matrons who share the fame of this day—of Mrs. James Barrett, of the Widow Brown, of Mrs. Amos Wood, and Hannah Burns, with the other faithful women whose self-command and ready wit and energy, on this great morning, show that the mothers of New England were like the fathers, and that equally in both their children may reverence their own best virtues.

A little later than Philip's war, one hundred and eighty-six years ago last night, while some of the first settlers of Massachusetts Bay still lingered, when the news came that King James II. had been dethroned, a company marched from this town and joined that general uprising of the colony which the next day, this very day, with old Simon Bradstreet at its head, deposed Sir Edmund Andros, the king's governor, and restored the ancient charter of the colony. "We demand only the traditional rights of Englishmen," said the English nobles, as they seated William and Mary upon the throne. "We ask nothing more," said the freemen of Concord, as they helped to dissolve royal government in America, and returned to their homes. Eighty-five years later the first Provincial Congress, which had been called to meet at Concord, if, for any reason, the General Court at Salem were obstructed, assembled in the old meeting-house on the 11th of October, 1774, the

first independent legislature in Massachusetts, in America; and from that hour to this the old mother-town has never forgotten the words nor forsworn the faith, of the Revolution, which had been proclaimed here six weeks before: "No danger shall affright, no difficulties intimidate us; and if, in support of our rights, we are called to encounter even death, we are yet undaunted, sensible that he can never die too soon who lays down his life in support of the laws and liberties of his country."

But the true glory of Concord, as of all New England, was the town-meeting, the nursery of American independence. When the Revolution began, of the eight millions of people then living in Old England, only one hundred and sixty thousand were voters; while in New England the great mass of free male adults were electors. And they had been so from the landing at Plymouth. Here in the wilderness the settlers were forced to govern themselves. They could not constantly refer and appeal to another authority twenty miles away through the woods. Every day brought its duty, that must be done before sunset. Roads must be made, schools built, young men trained to arms against the savage and the wild-cat, taxes must be levied and collected for all common purposes, preaching must be maintained; and who could know the time, the means, and the necessity so well as the community itself? Thus each town was a small but perfect republic, as solitary and secluded in the New England wilderness as the Swiss cantons among the Alps. No other practicable human institution has been devised or conceived to secure the just ends of local government so felicitous



as the town-meeting. It brought together the rich and the poor, the good and the bad, and gave character, eloquence, and natural leadership full and free play. It enabled superior experience and sagacity to govern; and virtue and intelligence alone are rulers by divine right. The Tories called the resolution for committees of correspondence the source of the rebellion; but it was only a correspondence of town-meetings. From that correspondence came the confederation of the colonies. Out of that arose the closer, majestic union of the Constitution, the greater phœnix born from the ashes of the lesser; and the national power and prosperity to-day rest securely only upon the foundation of the primary meeting. That is where the duty of the citizen begins. Neglect of that is disloyalty to liberty. No contrivance will supply its place, no excuse absolve the neglect; and the American who is guilty of that neglect is as deadly an enemy of his country as was the British soldier a century ago.

But here and now I cannot speak of the New England town-meeting without recalling its great genius, the New-Englander in whom the Revolution seemed to be most fully embodied, and the lofty prayer of whose life was answered upon this spot and on this day. He was not eloquent like Otis, nor scholarly like Quincy, nor all-fascinating like Warren; yet, bound heart to heart with these great men, his friends, the plainest, simplest, austerest among them, he gathered all their separate gifts, and, adding to them his own, fused the whole in the glow of that untiring energy, that unerring perception, that sublime will, which moved before

the chosen people of the colonies a pillar of cloud by day, of fire by night. People of Massachusetts, your proud and grateful hearts outstrip my lips in pronouncing the name of Samuel Adams. Elsewhere to-day, nearer the spot where he stood with his immortal friend Hancock a hundred years ago this morning, a son of Massachusetts, who bears the name of a friend of Samuel Adams, and whose own career has honorably illustrated the fidelity of your State to human liberty, will pay a fitting tribute to the true American tribune of the people—the father of the Revolution, as he was fondly called. But we, also, are his children, and must not omit our duty.

Until 1768 Samuel Adams did not despair of a peaceful issue of the quarrel with Great Britain. But when, in May of that year, the British frigate *Romney* sailed into Boston harbor, and her shotted guns were trained upon the town, he saw that the question was changed. From that moment he knew that America must be free or slave; and the unceasing effort of his life, by day and night, with tongue and pen, was to nerve his fellow-colonists to strike when the hour should come. On that gray December evening, two years later, when he rose in the Old South, and in a clear, calm voice said, "This meeting can do nothing more to save the country," and so gave the word for the march to the tea-ships, he comprehended more clearly, perhaps, than any other man in the colonies the immense and far-reaching consequences of his words. He was ready to throw the tea overboard, because he was ready to throw overboard the king and Parliament of England.



During the ten years from the passage of the Stamp Act to the day of Lexington and Concord, this poor man, in an obscure provincial town beyond the sea, was engaged with the British ministry in one of the mightiest contests that history records. Not a word in Parliament that he did not hear, not an act in the cabinet that he did not see. With brain and heart and conscience all alive, he opposed every hostile order in council with a British precedent, and arrayed against the government of Great Britain the battery of principles impregnable with the accumulated strength of centuries of British conviction. The cold Grenville, the brilliant Townsend, the obsequious North, the reckless Hillsborough, the crafty Dartmouth, all the ermined and coroneted chiefs of the proudest aristocracy in the world, derided, declaimed, denounced, levied unjust taxes, and sent troops to collect them, cheered loudly by a servile Parliament, the parasite of a headstrong king; and the plain Boston Puritan laid his finger on the vital point of the tremendous controversy, and held to it inexorably king, lords, commons, the people of England, and the people of America. Intrenched in his own honesty, the king's gold could not buy him; enshrined in the love of his fellow-citizens, the king's writ could not take him; and when, on this morning, the king's troops marched to seize him, his sublime faith saw beyond the clouds of the moment the rising sun of the America that we behold; and, careless of himself, mindful only of his country, he exultingly exclaimed, "Oh, what a glorious morning!"

Yet this man held no office but that of clerk of the

Assembly, to which he was yearly elected, and that of constant moderator of the town-meeting. That was his mighty weapon. The town-meeting was the alarm-bell with which he aroused the continent; it was the rapier with which he fenced with the ministry; it was the claymore with which he smote their counsels; it was the harp of a thousand strings that he swept into a burst of passionate defiance, or an electric call to arms, or a proud pæan of exulting triumph, defiance, challenge, and exultation—all lifting the continent to independence. His indomitable will and command of the popular confidence played Boston against London, the provincial town-meeting against the royal Parliament, Faneuil Hall against St. Stephen's. And as long as the American town-meeting is known, its great genius will be revered who with the town-meeting overthrew an empire. So long as Faneuil Hall stands, Samuel Adams will not want his most fitting monument; and, when Faneuil Hall falls, its name with his will be found written as with a sunbeam upon every faithful American heart.

The first imposing armed movement against the colonies, on the 19th of April, 1775, did not, of course, take by surprise a people so prepared. For ten years they had seen the possibility, for five years the probability, and for at least a year the certainty, of the contest. They quietly organized, watched, and waited. The royal governor, Gage, was a soldier, and he had read the signs of the times. He had fought with provincial troops at the bloody ambush of Braddock, and he felt the full force of the mighty determination



that exalted New England. He had about four thousand effective troops, trained veterans, with brilliant officers, who despised and ridiculed the Yankee militia. Massachusetts had provided for a constitutional army of fifteen thousand men. Minute companies were everywhere organized, and military supplies were deposited at convenient towns. Everybody was on the alert. Couriers were held ready to alarm the country, should the British march, and wagons to remove the stores. In the early spring, Gage sent out some of his officers as spies; and two of them came in disguise as far as Concord. On the 22d of March the Provincial Congress met in this town, and made the last arrangements for a possible battle, begging the militia and minute-men to be ready, but to act only on the defensive.

As the spring advanced it was plain that some movement would be made; and on Monday, the 17th of April, the Committee of Safety ordered part of the stores deposited here to be removed to Sudbury and Groton, and the cannon to be secreted. On Tuesday, the 18th, Gage, who had decided to send a force to Concord to destroy the stores, picketed the roads from Boston into Middlesex, to prevent any report of the intended march from spreading into the country. But the very air was electric. In the tension of the popular mind, every sound and sight was significant. It was part of Gage's plan to seize Hancock and Adams, who were at Lexington; and, on the evening of the 18th, the Committee of Safety, at Cambridge, sent them word to beware, for suspicious officers were abroad. A British grenadier, in full uniform, went into a shop in Bos-

ton. He might as well have proclaimed that an expedition was on foot. In the afternoon one of the governor's grooms strolled into a stable where John Ballard was cleaning a horse. John Ballard was a Son of Liberty; and when the groom idly remarked, in nervous English, that "there would be hell to pay to-morrow," John's heart leaped and his hand shook; and, asking the groom to finish cleaning the horse, he ran to a friend, who carried the news straight to Paul Revere, who told him he had already heard it from two other persons.

That evening, at ten o'clock, eight hundred British troops, under Lieutenant-Colonel Smith, took boat at the foot of the Common, and crossed to the Cambridge shore. Gage thought that his secret had been kept; but Lord Percy, who had heard the people say on the Common that the troops would miss their aim, undeceived him. Gage instantly ordered that no one should leave the town. But Dr. Warren was before him, and, as the troops crossed the river, William Dawes, with a message from Warren to Hancock and Adams, was riding over the Neck to Roxbury, and Paul Revere was rowing over the river farther down to Charlestown, having agreed with his friend, Robert Newman, to show lanterns from the belfry of the Old North Church—

"One, if by land, and two, if by sea"—

as a signal of the march of the British. Already the moon was rising, and, while the troops were stealthily landing at Lechmere Point, their secret was flashed out into the April night; and Paul Revere, springing into



the saddle upon the Charlestown shore, spurred away into Middlesex.

“How far that little candle throws his beams!”

The modest spire yet stands, reverend relic of the old town of Boston—of those brave men and of their deeds. Startling the land that night with the warning of danger, let it remind the land forever of the patriotism with which that danger was averted, and for our children, as for our fathers, still stand secure, the Pharos of American liberty.

It was a brilliant April night. The winter had been unusually mild, and the spring very forward. The hills were already green; the early grain waved in the fields; and the air was sweet with blossoming orchards. Already the robins whistled, the bluebird sang, and the benediction of peace rested upon the landscape. Under the cloudless moon the soldiers silently marched, and Paul Revere swiftly rode, galloping through Medford and West Cambridge, rousing every house as he went, spurring for Lexington, and Hancock and Adams, and evading the British patrols who had been sent out to stop the news. Stop the news! Already the village church-bells were beginning to ring the alarm, as the pulpits beneath them had been ringing for many a year. In the awakening houses lights flashed from window to window. Drums beat faintly far away and on every side. Signal-guns flashed and echoed. The watch-dogs barked, the cocks crew. Stop the news! Stop the sunrise! The murmuring night trembled with the summons so earnestly expected, so dreaded,

so desired. And as, long ago, the voice rang out at midnight along the Syrian shore, wailing that great Pan was dead, but in the same moment the choiring angels whispered, "Glory to God in the highest, for Christ is born;" so, if the stern alarm of that April night seemed to many a wistful and loyal heart to portend the passing glory of British dominion and the tragical chance of war, it whispered to them with prophetic inspiration, "Good-will to men: America is born!"

There is a tradition that, long before the troops reached Lexington, an unknown horseman thundered at the door of Captain Joseph Robbins, in Acton, waking every man and woman and the babe in the cradle, shouting that the regulars were marching to Concord, and that the rendezvous was the old North Bridge. Captain Robbins's son, a boy of ten years, heard the summons in the garret where he lay, and in a few minutes was on his father's old mare, a young Paul Revere, galloping along the road to rouse Captain Isaac Davis, who commanded the minute-men of Acton. He was a young man of thirty, a gunsmith by trade, brave and thoughtful, and tenderly fond of his wife and four children. The company assembled at his shop, formed, and marched a little way, when he halted them and returned for a moment to his house. He said to his wife, "Take good care of the children," kissed her, turned to his men, gave the order to march, and saw his home no more. Such was the history of that night in how many homes! The hearts of those men and women of Middlesex might break, but they could not waver. They had counted the cost. They knew what and



whom they served; and, as the midnight summons came, they started up and answered, "Here am I!"

Meanwhile the British bayonets, glistening in the moon, moved steadily along the road. Colonel Smith heard and saw that the country was aroused, and sent back to Boston for reinforcements, ordering Major Pitcairn, with six companies, to hasten forward and seize the bridges at Concord. Paul Revere and Dawes had reached Lexington by midnight, and had given the alarm. The men of Lexington instantly mustered on the Green; but, as there was no sign of the enemy, they were dismissed to await his coming. He was close at hand. Pitcairn swiftly advanced, seizing every man upon the road, and was not discovered until half-past four in the morning, within a mile or two of Lexington meeting-house. Then there was a general alarm. The bell rang, drums beat, guns fired; and sixty or seventy of the Lexington militia were drawn up in line upon the Green, Captain John Parker at their head. The British bayonets, glistening in the dawn, moved rapidly towards them. Pitcairn rode up, and angrily ordered the militia to surrender and disperse. But they held their ground. The troops fired over their heads. Still the militia stood firm. Then a deadly volley blazed from the British line, and eight of the Americans fell dead and ten wounded, at the doors of their homes, and in sight of their kindred. Captain Parker, seeing that it was massacre, not battle, ordered his men to disperse. They obeyed, some firing upon the enemy. The British troops, who had suffered little, with a loud huzza of victory pushed on towards Concord, six miles beyond.

Four hours before, Paul Revere and William Dawes had left Lexington to rouse Concord, and were soon overtaken by Dr. Samuel Prescott of that town, "a high Son of Liberty," who had been to Lexington upon a tender errand. A British patrol captured Revere and Dawes; but Prescott leaped a stone wall, and dashed on to Concord. Between one and two o'clock in the morning, Amos Melvin, the sentinel at the courthouse, rang the bell and roused the town. He sprang of heroic stock. One of his family, thirty years before, had commanded a company at Louisburg, and another at Crown Point; while four brothers of the same family served in the late war, and the honored names of the three who perished are carved upon your soldiers' monument. When the bell rang, the first man that appeared was William Emerson, the minister, with his gun in his hand. It was his faith that the scholar should be the minute-man of liberty—a faith which his descendants have piously cherished, and illustrated before the world. The minute-men gathered hastily upon the Common. The citizens, hurrying from their homes, secreted the military stores. Messengers were sent to the neighboring villages, and the peaceful town prepared for battle. The minute-men of Lincoln, whose captain was William Smith, and whose lieutenant was Samuel Hoar—a name not unknown in Middlesex, in Massachusetts, and in the country, and, wherever known, still honored for the noblest qualities of the men of the Revolution—had joined the Concord militia and minute-men, and part of them had marched down the Lexington road to reconnoitre. Seeing the British, they fell back towards the hill, over



the road at the entrance of the village, upon which stood the liberty-pole.

It was now seven o'clock. There were, perhaps, two hundred men in arms upon the hill. Below them, upon the Lexington road, a quarter of a mile away, rose a thick cloud of dust, from which, amid proudly rolling drums, eight hundred British bayonets flashed in the morning sun. The Americans saw that battle where they stood would be mere butchery; and they fell gradually back to a rising ground about a mile north of the meeting-house—the spot upon which we are now assembled. The British troops divided as they entered the town; the infantry coming over the hill from which the Americans had retired, the marines and grenadiers marching by the high-road. The place was well known to the British officers through their spies; and Colonel Smith, halting before the court-house, instantly sent detachments to hold the two bridges, and others to destroy the stores. But so carefully had these been secreted that, during the two or three hours in which they were engaged in the work, the British only emptied about sixty barrels of flour, half of which was afterwards saved, knocked off the trunnions of three cannon, burned sixteen new carriage-wheels and some barrels of wooden spoons and trenchers, threw five hundred pounds of balls into the pond and wells, cut down the liberty-pole, and fired the court-house.

The work was hurriedly done; for Colonel Smith, a veteran soldier, knew his peril. He had advanced twenty miles into a country of intelligent and resolute men, who were rising around him. All Middlesex was mov-

ing. From Acton and Lincoln, from Westford, Littleton, and Chelmsford, from Bedford and Billerica, from Stow, Sudbury, and Carlisle, the sons of Indian fighters and of soldiers of the old French war poured along the roads, shouldering the fire-locks and fowling-pieces and old king's-arms that had seen famous service when the earlier settlers had gone out against King Philip, or the later colonists had marched under the flag on which George Whitefield had written, "*Nil desperandum Christo duce*" (Never despair while Christ is captain); and those words the children of the Puritans had written on their hearts. As the minute-men from the other towns arrived, they joined the force upon the rising ground near the North Bridge, where they were drawn into line by Joseph Hosmer of Concord, who acted as adjutant. By nine o'clock some five hundred men were assembled, and a consultation of officers and chief citizens was held. That group of Middlesex farmers, here upon Punkatasset, without thought that they were heroes, or that the day and its deeds were to be so momentous, is a group as memorable as the men of Rütli on the Swiss Alps, or the barons in the meadow of Runnymede. They confronted the mightiest empire in the world, invincible on land, supreme on the sea, whose guns had just been heard in four continents at once, girdling the globe with victory. And that empire was their mother-land, in whose renown they had shared—the land dear to their hearts by a thousand ties of love, pride, and reverence. They took a sublime and awful responsibility. They could not know that the other colonies, or even their neighbors of Massachusetts,



would justify their action. There was as yet no Declaration of Independence, no continental army. There was, indeed, a general feeling that a blow would soon be struck; but to mistake the time, the place, the way, might be to sacrifice the great cause itself and to ruin America. But their conscience and their judgment assured them that the hour had come. Before them lay their homes, and on the hill beyond, the graveyard in which their forefathers slept. A guard of the king's troops opposed their entrance to their own village. Those troops were at that moment searching their homes, perhaps insulting their wives and children. Already they saw the smoke as of burning houses rising in the air, and they resolved to march into the town, and to fire upon the troops if they were opposed. They resolved upon organized, aggressive, forcible resistance to the military power of Great Britain—the first that had been offered in the colonies. All unconsciously every heart beat time to the music of the slave's epitaph in the graveyard that overhung the town:

"God wills us free; man wills us slaves.  
I will as God wills; God's will be done."

Isaac Davis of Acton drew his sword, turned towards his company, and said, "I haven't a man that's afraid to go." Colonel Barrett of Concord gave the order to march. In double file and with trailed arms the men moved along the causeway, the Acton company in front; Major John Buttrick of Concord, Captain Isaac Davis of Acton, and Lieutenant-Colonel John Robinson of Westford, leading the way. As they approached the

bridge, the British forces withdrew across it, and began to take up the planks. Major Buttrick ordered his men to hasten their march. As they came within ten or fifteen rods of the bridge, a shot was fired by the British, which wounded Jonas Brown, one of the Concord minute-men, and Luther Blanchard, fifer of the Acton company. A British volley followed; and Isaac Davis of Acton, making a way for his countrymen, like Arnold von Winkelried at Sempach, fell dead, shot through the heart. By his side fell his friend and neighbor, Abner Hosmer, a youth of twenty-two. Seeing them fall, Major Buttrick turned to his men, and, raising his hand, cried, "Fire, fellow-soldiers! for God's sake, fire!" John Buttrick gave the word. The cry rang along the line. The Americans fired. The Revolution began. It began here. Let us put off the shoes from off our feet; for the place whereon we stand is holy ground.

One of the British was killed, several were wounded; and they retreated in confusion towards the centre of the village. The engagement was doubtless seen by Smith and Pitcairn from the graveyard hill that overlooked the town; and the shots were heard by all the searching parties, which immediately returned in haste and disorder. Colonel Smith instantly prepared to retire; and at noon, one hundred years ago, at this hour, the British columns marched out of yonder square. Then and there began the retreat of British power from the American colonies. Through seven weary and wasting years it continued. From Bunker Hill to Long Island, from Princeton, Trenton, and Saratoga, from the Brandywine, Monmouth, and King's Moun-



tain, through the bloody snow at Valley Forge, through the treachery of Arnold and of Lee, through cabals and doubt and poverty and despair, but steadily urged by one great heart that strengthened the continent—the heart of George Washington—the British retreat went on, from Concord Bridge and Lexington Green to the plains of Yorktown and the king's acknowledgment of American independence.

Of the beginning of this retreat, of that terrible march of the exhausted troops from this square to Boston, I have no time fitly to tell the tale. Almost as soon as it began all Massachusetts was in motion. William Prescott mustered his regiment of minute-men at Pepperell, and Timothy Pickering at Salem and Marblehead. Dedham left no man behind between the ages of sixteen and seventy. The minute-men of Worcester marched out of the town one way as the news went out the other, and, flying over the mountains, sent Berkshire to Bunker Hill. Meanwhile the men of Concord and the neighborhood, following the British over the bridge, ran along the heights above the Lexington road, and posted themselves to await the enemy. The retreating British column, with wide-sweeping flankers, advanced steadily and slowly. No drum beat, no fife blew; there was the hushed silence of intense expectation. As the troops passed Merriam's Corner, a little beyond Concord, and the flank-guard was called in, they turned suddenly and fired upon the Americans. The minute-men and militia instantly returned the fire, and the battle began that lasted until sunset.

When Colonel Smith ordered the retreat, although

he and his officers may have had some misgivings, they had, probably, lost them in the contempt of regulars for the militia; but, from the moment of the firing at Merriam's Corner, they were undeceived. The landscape was alive with armed men. They swarmed through every wood-path and byway, across the pastures and over the hills. Some came up in order along the roads, as from Reading and Billerica, from East Sudbury and Bedford; and John Parker's company, from Lexington, waited in a woody defile to avenge the death of their comrades. The British column marched steadily on; while from trees, rocks, and fences, from houses, barns, and sheds, blazed the withering American fire. The hills echoed and flashed. The woods rang. The road became an endless ambuscade of flame. The Americans seemed to the appalled British troops to drop from the clouds, to spring from the earth. With every step the attack was deadlier, the danger more imminent. For some time discipline and the plain extremity of the peril sustained the order of the British line. But the stifling clouds of dust, the consuming thirst, the exhaustion of utter fatigue, the wagons full of wounded men moaning and dying, madly pressing through the ranks to the front, the constant falling of their comrades, officers captured and killed, and, through all, the fatal and incessant shot of an unseen foe, smote with terror that haughty column, which, shrinking, bleeding, wavering, reeled through Lexington panic-stricken and broken. The officers, seeing the dire extremity, fought their way to the front, and threatened the men with death if they advanced. The breaking line recoiled a



little, and even steadied under one of the sharpest attacks of the day ; for not as yet were Hessians hired to enslave Americans, and it was English blood and pluck on both sides. At two o'clock in the afternoon, a half-mile beyond Lexington meeting-house, just as the English officers saw that destruction or surrender was the only alternative, Lord Percy, with a reinforcement of twelve hundred men, came up, and, opening with two cannon upon the Americans, succored his flying and desperate comrades, who fell upon the ground among Percy's troops, their parched tongues hanging from their mouths.

The flower of General Gage's army was now upon the field ; but its commander saw at once that its sole hope of safety was to continue the retreat. After half an hour's delay the march was resumed, and with it the barbarities as well as the sufferings of war. Lord Percy threw out flanking-parties, which entered the houses upon the line of march, plundering and burning. The fields of Menotomy, or Arlington, through which lay the road, became a plain of blood and fire. But the American pursuit was relentless, and beyond Lexington the lower counties and towns came hurrying to the battle. Many a man afterwards famous was conspicuous that day ; and, near West Cambridge, Joseph Warren was the inspiring soul of the struggle. It was now past five o'clock. The British ammunition was giving out. The officers, too much exposed in the saddle, alighted and marched with the men, who, as they approached Charlestown, encountered the hottest fire of the day. General Gage had learned the perilous ex-

tremity of his army from a messenger sent by Percy, and had issued a proclamation threatening to lay Charlestown in ashes if the troops were attacked in the streets. The town hummed with the vague and appalling rumors of the events of the day, and, just before sunset, the excited inhabitants heard the distant guns, and soon saw the British troops running along the old Cambridge road to Charlestown Neck, firing as they came. They had just escaped the militia, seven hundred strong, from Salem and Marblehead—the flower of Essex; and as the sun was setting, they entered Charlestown and gained the shelter of their frigate-guns. Then General Heath ordered the American pursuit to stop, and the battle was over. But all that day and night the news was flying from mouth to mouth, from heart to heart, rousing every city, town, and solitary farm in the colonies; and before the last shot of the minute-men on the British retreat from Concord Bridge was fired, or the last wounded grenadier had been rowed across the river, the whole country was in arms. Massachusetts, New England, America, were closing around the city; and the siege of Boston and the war of American Independence had begun.

Such was the opening battle of the Revolution—a conflict which, so far as we can see, saved civil liberty in two hemispheres—saved England as well as America, and whose magnificent results shine through the world as the beacon-light of free popular government. And who won this victory? The minute-men and militia, who, in the history of our English race, have been always the vanguard of freedom. The minute-man of



the American Revolution—who was he? He was the husband and father who, bred to love liberty, and to know that lawful liberty is the sole guarantee of peace and progress, left the plough in the furrow and the hammer on the bench, and, kissing wife and children, marched to die—or to be free. He was the son and lover, the plain, shy youth of the singing-school and the village choir, whose heart beat to arms for his country, and who felt, though he could not say, with the old English cavalier,

"I could not love thee, deare, so much,  
Loved I not honor more."

The minute-man of the Revolution!—he was the old, the middle-aged, and the young. He was Captain Miles of Concord, who said that he went to battle as he went to church. He was Captain Davis of Acton, who reproved his men for jesting on the march. He was Deacon Josiah Haynes of Sudbury, eighty years old, who marched with his company to the South Bridge at Concord, then joined in the hot pursuit to Lexington, and fell as gloriously as Warren at Bunker Hill. He was James Hayward of Acton, twenty-two years old, foremost in that deadly race from Concord to Charlestown, who raised his piece at the same moment with a British soldier, each exclaiming, "You are a dead man!" The Briton dropped, shot through the heart. James Hayward fell mortally wounded. "Father," he said, "I started with forty balls; I have three left. I never did such a day's work before. Tell mother not to mourn too much; and tell her whom I love more than my mother, that I am not sorry I turned out."

This was the minute-man of the Revolution, the rural citizen trained in the common school, the church, and the town-meeting; who carried a bayonet that thought, and whose gun, loaded with a principle, brought down, not a man, but a system. Him we gratefully recall to-day; him, in yon manly figure wrought in the metal which but feebly typifies his inexorable will, we commit in his immortal youth to the reverence of our children. And here among these peaceful fields—here in the county whose children first gave their blood for American union and independence, and, eighty-six years later, gave it, first also, for a truer union and a larger liberty—here in the heart of Middlesex, county of Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill, stand fast, Son of Liberty, as the minute-man stood at the old North Bridge! But, should we or our descendants, false to liberty, false to justice and humanity, betray in any way their cause, spring into life as a hundred years ago, take one more step, descend, and lead us, as God led you in saving America, to save the hopes of man!

At the end of a century we can see the work of this day as our fathers could not; we can see that then the final movement began of a process long and unconsciously preparing, which was to intrust liberty to new forms and institutions that seemed full of happy promise for mankind. And now, for nearly a century, what was formerly called the experiment of a representative republic of imperial extent and power has been tried. Has it fulfilled the hopes of its founders and the just expectations of mankind? I have already glanced at its early and fortunate conditions, and we know how vast



and splendid were its early growth and development. Our material statistics soon dazzled the world. Europe no longer sneered, but gazed in wonder, waiting and watching. Our population doubled every fifteen years, and our wealth every ten years. Every little stream among the hills turned a mill; and the great inland seas, bound by the genius of Clinton to the ocean, became the highway of boundless commerce, the path of unprecedented empire. Our farms were the granary of other lands. Our cotton-fields made England rich. Still we chased the whale in the Pacific Ocean, and took fish in the tumbling seas of Labrador. We hung out friendly lights along thousands of miles of coast to tempt the trade of every clime; and wherever, on the dim rim of the globe, there was a harbor, it was white with American sails. Meanwhile at home the political foreboding of Federalism had died away, and its very wail seemed a tribute to the pacific glories of the land.

"The ornament of beauty is Suspect,  
A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air."

The government was felt to be but a hand of protection and blessing; labor was fully employed; capital was secure; the army was a jest; enterprise was pushing through the Alleghanies, grasping and settling the El Dorado of the prairies, and, still braving the wilderness, reached out towards the Rocky Mountains, and, reversing the voyages of Columbus, rediscovered the Old World from the New. America was the Benjamin of nations, the best-beloved of Heaven; and the starry flag of the United States flashed a line of celestial light

around the world, the harbinger of freedom, peace, and prosperity.

Such was the vision and the exulting faith of fifty years ago. "Atlantis hath risen from the ocean!" cried Edward Everett to applauding Harvard; and Daniel Webster answered from Bunker Hill, "If we fail, popular governments are impossible." So far as they could see, they stood among the unchanged conditions of the early republic. And those conditions are familiar. The men who founded the republic were few in number, planted chiefly along a temperate coast, remote from the world. They were a homogeneous people, increasing by their own multiplication, speaking the same language, of the same general religious faith, cherishing the same historic and political traditions, universally educated, hardy, thrifty, with general equality of fortune, and long and intelligent practice of self-government; while the slavery that existed among them, inhuman in itself, was not seriously defended, and was believed to be disappearing. But within the last half-century causes then latent, or wholly incalculable before, have radically changed those conditions; and we enter upon the second century of the republic with responsibilities which neither our fathers nor the men of fifty years ago could possibly foresee.

Think, for instance, of the change wrought by foreign immigration, with all its necessary consequences. In the State of Massachusetts to-day, the number of citizens of foreign birth, who have no traditional association with the story of Concord and Lexington, is larger than the entire population of the State on the



day of battle. The first fifty years after that day brought to the whole country fewer immigrants than are now living in Massachusetts alone. At the end of that half-century, when Mr. Everett stood here, less than three hundred thousand foreign immigrants had come to this country; but, in the fifty years that have since elapsed, there has been an immigration of more than nine millions of persons. The aggregate population in the last fifty years has advanced somewhat more than threefold; the foreign immigration, more than thirty-fold; so that now immigrants and the children of immigrants are a quarter of the whole population. This enormous influx of foreigners has added an immense ignorance, and entire unfamiliarity with republican ideas and habits, to the voting class. It has brought other political traditions, other languages, and other religious faiths. It has introduced powerful and organized influences not friendly to the republican principle of freedom of thought and action. It is to the change produced by immigration that we owe the first serious questioning of the public-school system, which was the nursery of the early republic, and which is today the palladium of free popular government.

Do not misunderstand me. I am not lamenting, even in thought, the boundless hospitality of America. I do not forget that the whole European race came hither but yesterday, and has been domesticated here not yet three hundred years. I am not insensible of the proud claim of America to be the refuge of the oppressed of every clime; nor do I doubt in her maturity her power, if duly directed, to assimilate whole nations,

if need be, as in her infancy she achieved her independence, and in her prime maintained her unity. But if she has been the hope of the world, and is so still, it is because she has understood both the conditions and the perils of freedom, and watches carefully the changing conditions under which republican liberty is to be maintained. She will still welcome to her ample bosom all who choose to be called her children. But, if she is to remain the mother of liberty, it will not be the result of those craven counsels whose type is the ostrich burying his head in the sand, but of that wise and heroic statesmanship whose symbol is her own heaven-soaring eagle, gazing undazzled even at the spots upon the sun.

Again: within the century steam has enormously expanded the national domain, and every added mile is an added strain to our system. The marvellous ease of communication both by rail and telegraph tends to obliterate conservative local lines, and to make a fatal centralization more possible. The telegraph, which instantly echoes the central command at the remotest point, becomes both a facility and a temptation to exercise command; while below upon the rail the armed blow swiftly follows the word that flies along the wire. Steam concentrates population in cities. But, when the government was formed, the people were strictly rural, and there were but six cities with eight thousand or more inhabitants. In 1790, only one thirtieth of the population lived in cities; in 1870, more than one fifth. Steam destroys the natural difficulties of communication; but those very difficulties are barriers against invasion, and protect the independence of



each little community, the true foundation of our free, republican system. In New England, the characteristic village and local life of the last century perishes in the age of steam. Meanwhile the enormous accumulation of capital engaged in great enterprises, with unscrupulous greed of power, constantly tends to make itself felt in corruption of the press, which moulds public opinion, and of the legislature, which makes the laws. Thus steam and the telegraph tend to the concentration of capital and the consolidation of political power—a tendency which threatens liberty, and which was wholly unknown when the republic began, and was unsuspected fifty years ago. Sweet Liberty is a mountain nymph, because mountains baffle the pursuer. But the inventions that level mountains and annihilate space alarm that gracious spirit, who sees her greater insecurity. But stay, heaven-eyed maid, and stay forever! Behold! our devoted wills shall be thy invincible Alps, our loyal hearts thy secret bower, the spirit of our fathers a cliff of adamant, that engineering skill can never pierce nor any foe can scale.

But the most formidable problem for popular government which the opening of our second century presents springs from a source which was unsuspected a hundred years ago, and which the orators of fifty years since forbore to name. This was the system of slave-labor, which vanished in civil war. But slavery had not been the fatal evil that it was if, with its abolition, its consequences had disappeared. It holds us still in mortmain. Its dead hand is strong, as its living power was terrible. Emancipation has left the republic ex-

posed to a new and extraordinary trial of the principles and practices of free government. A civilization resting upon slavery, as formerly in part of the country, however polished and ornate, is necessarily aristocratic and hostile to republican equality, while the exigencies of such a society forbid that universal education which is indispensable to wise popular government. When war emancipates the slaves and makes them equal citizens, the ignorance and venality which are the fatal legacies of slavery to the subject class, whether white or black, and the natural alienation of the master class, which alone has political knowledge and experience, with all the secret conspiracies, the reckless corruption, the political knavery, springing naturally from such a situation, and ending often in menacing disorder that seems to invite the military interference and supervision of the government—all this accumulation of difficulty and danger lays a strain along the very fibre of free institutions; for it suggests the twofold question, whether the vast addition of the ignorance of the emancipated vote to that of the immigrant vote may not overwhelm the intelligent vote of the country, and whether the constant appeal to the central hand of power—however necessary it may seem, and for whatever reason of humanity and justice it may be urged—must not necessarily destroy that local self-reliance which was the very seed of the American republic, and fatally familiarize the country with that employment of military power which is inconsistent with free institutions, and bold resistance to which has forever consecrated the spot on which we stand.



These are some of the more obvious changes in the conditions under which the republic is to be maintained. I mention them merely, but every wise patriot sees and ponders them. Does he therefore despond? Heaven forbid! When was there ever an auspicious day for humanity that was not one of doubt and conflict? The robust moral manhood of America confronts the future with steadfast faith and indomitable will, raising the old battle-cry of the race for larger liberty and surer law. It sees clouds, indeed, as Sam Adams saw them when this day dawned; but with him it sees through and through them, and with him thanks God for the glorious morning. There is, indeed, a fashion of scepticism of American principles, even among some Americans; but it is one of the oldest and worst fashions in our history. There is a despondency which fondly fancies that, in its beginning, the American republic moved proudly towards the future with all the splendid assurance of the Persian Xerxes descending on the shores of Greece; but that it sits to-day among shattered hopes, like Xerxes above his ships at Salamis. And when was this golden age? Was it when John Adams appealed from the baseness of his own time to the greater candor and patriotism of this? Was it when Fisher Ames mourned over lost America, like Rachel for her children, and would not be comforted? Was it when William Wirt said that he sought in vain for a man fit for the presidency or for great responsibility? Was it when Chancellor Livingston saw only a threatening future, because Congress was so feeble? Was it when we ourselves saw the industry, the commerce, the soci-

ety, the Church, the courts, the statesmanship, the conscience, of America seemingly prostrate under the foot of slavery? Was this the golden age of these doubting sighs, this the region behind the north wind of these reproachful regrets? And is it the young nation which, with prayer and faith, with untiring devotion and unconquerable will, has lifted its bruised and broken body from beneath that crushing heel, whose future is distrusted?

Nay, this very scepticism is one of the foes that we must meet and conquer. Remember, fellow-citizens, that the impulse of republican government, given a century ago at the old North Bridge, has shaken every government in the world, but has been itself wholly unshaken by them. It has made monarchy impossible in France. It has freed the Russian serfs. It has united Germany against ecclesiastical despotism. It has flashed into the night of Spain. It has emancipated Italy, and discrowned the pope as king. In England, repealing the disabilities of Catholic and Hebrew, it forecasts the separation of Church and State, and step by step transforms monarchy into another form of republic. And here at home how glorious its story! In a tremendous war between men of the same blood—men who recognize and respect each other's valor—we have proved what was always doubted—the prodigious power, endurance, and resources of a republic; and in emancipating an eighth of the population, we have at last gained the full opportunity of the republican principle. Sir, it is the signal felicity of this occasion that, on the one hundredth anniversary of the first battle in the war of



American Independence, I may salute you, who led to victory the citizen-soldiers of American liberty, as the first elected President of the free republic of the United States. Fortunate man! to whom God has given the priceless boon of associating your name with that triumph of freedom which will presently bind the East and the West, the North and the South, in a closer and more perfect union for the establishment of justice and the security of the blessings of liberty than these States have ever known.

Fellow-citizens, that union is the lofty task which this hallowed day and this sacred spot impose upon us. And what cloud of doubt so dark hangs over us as that which lowered above the colonies when the troops of the king marched into this town, and the men of Middlesex resolved to pass the Bridge? With their faith and their will we shall win their victory. No royal governor, indeed, sits in yon stately capital, no hostile fleet for many a year has vexed the waters of our coasts, nor is any army but our own ever likely to tread our soil. Not such are our enemies to-day. They do not come proudly stepping to the drum-beat, with bayonets flashing in the morning sun. But wherever party spirit shall strain the ancient guarantees of freedom; or bigotry and ignorance shall lay their fatal hands upon education; or the arrogance of caste shall strike at equal rights; or corruption shall poison the very springs of national life—there, minute-men of liberty, are your Lexington Green and Concord Bridge; and, as you love your country and your kind, and would have your children rise up and call you blessed, spare not the en-

emy! Over the hills, out of the earth, down from the clouds, pour in resistless might. Fire from every rock and tree, from door and window, from hearthstone and chamber; hang upon his flank and rear from noon to sunset, and so, through a land blazing with holy indignation, hurl the hordes of ignorance and corruption and injustice back, back, in utter defeat and ruin.





V

**THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION**

**AN ORATION DELIVERED AT THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION**

**IN THE TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, RICHMOND COUNTY,**

**N. Y., JULY 4, 1876**



## THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

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MR. PRESIDENT, FELLOW-CITIZENS, NEIGHBORS, AND FRIENDS: On April 19, 1775, when Samuel Adams, well called the Father of the Revolution, heard the first shots of the British upon Lexington Green, he knew that war had at last begun, and full of enthusiasm, of hope, of trust in America, he exclaimed with rapture, "Oh, what a glorious morning!" And there is no fellow-citizen of ours, wherever he may be to-day, whether sailing the remotest seas or wandering among the highest Alps, however far removed, however long separated from his home, who, as his eyes open upon this glorious morning, does not repeat with the same fervor the words of Samuel Adams, and thank God with all his heart that he too is an American. In imagination he sees infinitely multiplied the very scene that we behold. From every roof and gable, from every door and window of all the myriads of happy American homes from the seaboard to the mountains, and from the mountains still onward to the sea, the splendor of this summer heaven is reflected in the starry beauty of the American flag. From every steeple and tower in crowded cities and towns, from the village belfry and the school-house



and meeting-house on solitary country roads, ring out the joyous peals. From countless thousands of reverent lips ascends the voice of prayer. Everywhere the inspiring words of the great Declaration that we have heard, the charter of our independence, the scripture of our liberty, is read aloud in eager, in grateful ears. And above all, and under all, pulsing through all the praise and prayer, from the frozen sea to the tropic gulf, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the great heart of a great people beats in fulness of joy, beats with pious exultation, that here at last, upon our soil—here, by the wisdom of our fathers and the bravery of our brothers, is founded a republic, vast, fraternal, peaceful, upon the divine corner-stone of liberty, justice, and equal rights.

There have, indeed, been other republics, but they were founded upon other principles. There are republics in Switzerland to-day a thousand years old. But Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden are pure democracies, not larger than the county in which we live, and wholly unlike our vast national and representative republic. Athens was a republic, but Marathon and Salamis, battles whose names are melodious in the history of liberty, were won by slaves. Rome was a republic, but slavery degraded it to an empire. Venice, Genoa, Florence, were republican cities; but they were tyrants over subject neighbors, and slaves of aristocrats at home. There were republics in Holland, honorable forever, because from them we received our common schools, the bulwark of American liberty; but they, too, were republics of classes, not of the people. It was reserved for

our fathers to build a republic upon a declaration of the equal rights of men; to make the government as broad as humanity; to found political institutions upon faith in human nature. "The sacred rights of mankind," fervently exclaimed Alexander Hamilton, "are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records; they are written as with a sunbeam in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of Divinity itself." That was the sublime faith in which this century began. The world stared and sneered—the difficulties and dangers were colossal. For more than eighty years that Declaration remained only a declaration of faith. But, fellow-citizens, fortunate beyond all men, our eyes behold its increasing fulfilment. The sublime faith of the fathers is more and more the familiar fact of the children. And the proud flag which floats over America to-day, as it is the bond of indissoluble union, so it is the seal of ever-enlarging equality and ever-surer justice. Could the men of that earlier day, could Samuel Adams and all his associates have lived through this amazing century to see this glorious morning, as they counted these teeming and expanding States, as they watched the advance of republican empire from the Alleghanies, through a country of golden plenty, passing the snowy Sierras and descending to the western sea of peace; as they saw the little spark of political liberty, which they painfully struck, blown by the eager breath of a century into a flame which aspires to heaven and illuminates the earth,—they would bow their reverend heads at this moment, as Adams and Jefferson bowed theirs fifty years ago to-day, and the happy bur-



den of their hearts would tremble from their expiring lips, "Now, oh Lord, let thy servants depart in peace, for our eyes have seen thy salvation."

But we have learned, by sharp experience, that prosperity is girt with peril. In this hour of exultation we will not scorn the wise voices of warning and censure, the friendly and patriotic voices of the time. We will not forget that the vital condition of national greatness and prosperity is the moral character of the people. It is not vast territory, a temperate climate, exhaustless mines, enormous wealth, amazing inventions, imperial enterprises, magnificent public works, a population miraculously multiplied; it is not busy shops, and humming mills, and flaming forges, and commerce that girdles the globe with the glory of a flag, that make a nation truly great. These are but opportunities. They are like the health and strength and talents of a man, which are not his character and manhood, but only the means of their development. The test of our national greatness is the use we make of our opportunities. If they breed extravagance, wild riot, and license; if they make fraud plausible and corruption easy; if they confuse private morality and debauch the public conscience,—beware, beware! for all our prosperity is then but a Belshazzar's feast of splendor, and while we sit drunken with wine and crowned with flowers, the walls of our stately palace are flaming and cracking with the terrible words of our doom.

But, with all faults confessed and concessions made, with all dangers acknowledged and difficulties measured, I think we may truly say that, upon the whole,

we have used our opportunities well. The commanding political fact of the century that ends to-day is the transcendent force and the recuperative power of republican institutions. Neither the siren of prosperity nor the red fury of civil war has been able to destroy our government, or to weaken our faith in the principles upon which it is founded. We have been proud and reckless and defiant; we have sinned, and have justly suffered; but I say in your hearing, as, had I the voice, I would say in the hearing of the world to-day, that out of the fiery furnace of our afflictions America emerges, at this moment, greater, better, truer, nobler, than ever in its history before.

I do not forget how much is due to the political genius of the race from which we are so largely sprung. Nine tenths of the revolutionary population of the country was of English stock. The Declaration of Independence was a fruit of Magna Charta, and Magna Charta grew from seed planted before history in the German forest. Our friend, the historian of the island,\* in the interesting sketch of this town that he read us, tells us that Northfield was the most patriotic town in the county during the Revolution, and that the original settlers were, in great part, of German stock. The two facts naturally go together. The instinct of individual liberty and independence is the germ of the political development of that race from which also our fathers sprang. They came from England to plant, as they believed, a purer England. Their new England was to

\* Mr. John J. Clute.



be a true England. At last they took up arms reluctantly to defend England against herself, to maintain the principles and traditions of English liberty. The farmers of Bunker Hill were the barons of Runnymede in a later day; and the victory at Yorktown was not so much the seal of a revolution as the pledge of continuing English progress. This day dawns upon a common perception of that truth on both sides of the ocean. In no generous heart on either shore lingers any trace of jealousy or hostility. It is a day of peace, of joy, of friendship. Here above my head, and in your presence, side by side with our own flag, hangs the tri-color of France, our earliest friend, and the famous cross of England, our ally in civilization. May our rivalry in all true progress be as inspiring as our kinship is close! In the history of the century, I claim that we have done our share. In real service to humanity, in the diffusion of intelligence and the lightening of the burden of labor, in beneficent inventions—yes, in the education of the public conscience and the growth of political morality, of which this very day sees the happy signs, I claim that the act of this day a hundred years ago is justified, and that we have done not less, as an independent State, than our venerable mother England.

Think what the country was that hundred years ago. To-day the State of which we are citizens contains a population larger than that of all the States of the Union when Washington was President. Yet New York is now but one of thirty-eight States, for to-day our youngest sister, Colorado, steps into the national family of the Union. The country of a century ago

was our fathers' small estate. That of to-day is our noble heritage. Fidelity to the spirit and principles of our fathers will enable us to deliver it enlarged, beautified, ennobled, to our children of the new century. Unwavering faith in the absolute supremacy of the moral law, the clear perception that well-considered, thoroughly proved, and jealously guarded institutions are the chief security of liberty, and an unswerving loyalty to ideas made the men of the Revolution and secured American independence. The same faith and the same loyalty will preserve that independence, and secure progressive liberty forever. And here and now, upon this sacred centennial altar, let us, at least, swear that we will try public and private men by precisely the same moral standard; and that no man who directly or indirectly connives at corruption or coercion, to acquire office or to retain it, or who prostitutes any opportunity or position of public service to his own or another's advantage, shall have our countenance or our vote. The one thing that no man in this country is so poor that he cannot own is his vote; and he is bound to use it not only honestly, but intelligently. Good government does not come of itself; it is the result of the skilful co-operation of good and shrewd men. If they will not combine, bad men will; and if they sleep, the devil will sow tares. And, as we pledge ourselves to our fathers' fidelity, we may well believe that in this hushed hour of noon their gracious spirits bend over us in benediction. In this sweet summer air; in the strong breath of the ocean that beats upon our southern shore; in the cool winds that blow over the island from the

northern hills; in these young faces, and the songs of liberty that murmur from their lips; in the electric sympathy that binds all our hearts with each other, and with those of our brothers and sisters throughout the land, lifting our beloved country as a sacrifice to God, I see, I feel, the presence of our fathers: the blithe heroism of Warren, and the unsullied youth of Quincy; the fiery impulse of Otis and Patrick Henry; the serene wisdom of John Jay, and the comprehensive grasp of Hamilton; the sturdy and invigorating force of John and of Samuel Adams; and at last, embracing them all, as our eyes at this moment behold cloud and hill, and roof and tree, and field and river, blent in one perfect picture, so, combining and subordinating all the great powers of his great associates, I feel the glory of the presence, I bend my head to the blessing of the ever-living, the immortal Washington.

VI

BURGOYNE'S SURRENDER

AN ORATION DELIVERED ON THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF BURGOYNE'S SURRENDER, AT SCHUYLERVILLE, N. Y., OCTOBER 17, 1877





## BURGOYNE'S SURRENDER

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WITHIN the territory of New York, broad, fertile, and fair, from Montauk to Niagara, from the Adirondacks to the bay, there is no more memorable spot than that on which we stand. Elsewhere, indeed, the great outlines of the landscape are more imposing, and on this autumnal day the parting benediction of the year rests with the same glory on other hills and other waters of the imperial State. Far above, these gentle heights rise into towering mountains; far below, this placid stream broadens and deepens around the metropolis of the continent into a spacious highway for the commerce of the world. Other valleys, with teeming intervales and fruitful upland, rich with romantic tradition and patriotic story, filled, like this, with happy homes and humming workshops, wind through the vast commonwealth, ample channels of its various life; and town and city, village and hamlet, church and school, everywhere illustrate and promote the prosperous repose of a community great, intelligent, and free. But this spot alone within our borders is consecrated as the scene of one of the decisive events that affect the course of history. There are deeds on which the welfare of the

world seems to be staked; conflicts in which liberty is lost or won; victories by which the standard of human progress is full high advanced. Between sunrise and sunset, on some chance field, the deed is done; but from that day it is a field enchanted. Imagination invests it with

"The light that never was on sea or land."

The grateful heart of mankind repeats its name; heroism feeds upon its story; patriotism kindles with its perennial fire. Such is the field on which we stand. It is not ours. It does not belong to New York, nor to America. It is an indefeasible estate of the world, like the field of Arbela, of Tours, of Hastings, of Waterloo; and the same lofty charm that draws the pilgrim to the plain of Marathon resistlessly leads him to the field of Saratoga.

The drama of the Revolution opened in New England, culminated in New York, and closed in Virginia. It was a happy fortune that the three colonies which represented the various territorial sections of the settled continent were each in turn the chief seat of war. The common sacrifice, the common struggle, the common triumph, tended to weld them together locally, politically, and morally. Doubtless there were conflicts of provincial pride and jealousy and suspicion. The Virginia officers smiled loftily at the raw Yankee militia; the Green Mountain boys distrusted the polished discipline of New York; and the New York Schuyler thought those boys brave, but dangerously independent. In every great crisis of the war, however, there was a

common impulse and devotion, and the welfare of the continent obliterated provincial lines. It is by the few heaven-piercing peaks, not by the confused mass of upland, that we measure the height of the Andes, of the Alps, of the Himalaya. It is by Joseph Warren, not by Benjamin Church, by John Jay, not by Sir John Johnson, by George Washington, not by Benedict Arnold, that we test the quality of the Revolutionary character. The voice of Patrick Henry from the mountains answered that of James Otis by the sea. Paul Revere's lantern shone through the valley of the Hudson, and flashed along the cliffs of the Blue Ridge. The scattering volley of Lexington Green swelled to the triumphant thunder of Saratoga, and the reverberation of Burgoyne's falling arms in New York shook those of Cornwallis in Virginia from his hands. Doubts, jealousies, prejudices, were merged in one common devotion. The union of the colonies to secure liberty foretold the union of the States to maintain it; and wherever we stand on Revolutionary fields, or inhale the sweetness of Revolutionary memories, we tread the ground and breathe the air of invincible national union.

Our especial interest and pride to-day are in the most important event of the Revolution upon the soil of New York. Concord and Lexington, Bunker Hill and Bennington, the Brandywine and Germantown, have had their fitting centennial commemorations; and already, at Kingston and Oriskany, New York has taken up the wondrous tale of her civil and military achievements. In proud continuation of her story we stand here. Sons of sires who bled with Sterling



on the Long Island shore; who fought with Herkimer on the deadly Oneida defile; who defended the Highland forts with George Clinton; who, with Robert Livingston and Gouverneur Morris, were driven from town to town by stress of war, yet framed a civil constitution, all untouched by the asperity of the conflict, and a noble model for all free States;—sons of sires who, leaving the plough and the bench, gathered on this historic war-path—the key of the then civilized continent; the western battle-ground of Europe; the trail by which Frontenac's Indians prowled to Schenectady, and crept to the Connecticut and beyond; the way by which Sir William Johnson and his army passed in the old French war, and humbled Dieskau at Lake George; the road along which Abercrombie and his bright array marched to disaster in the summer morning, and Amherst marshalled his men to cooperate with Wolfe in the humbling of Quebec;—sons of sires who—mustering here on ground still trembling with the tread of armies, where the air forever echoes with the savage war-whoop, or murmurs with the pathetic music of the march and the camp—

“Why, soldiers, why  
Should we be melancholy, boys?  
Whose business 'tis to die!”—

even here withstood the deadly British blow and, enveloping the haughty Burgoyne, compelled not only him to yield his sword, but England to surrender an empire;—sons of such sires, who should not proudly recall such deeds of theirs and gratefully revere their

memory, would be forever scorned as faithless depositaries of the great English and American tradition, and the great human benediction of patient, orderly, self-restrained liberty.

When King George heard of the battle of Bunker Hill, he consoled himself with the thought that New York was still unswervingly loyal; and it was the hope and the faith of his ministry that the rebellion might at last be baffled in that great colony. It was a region of vast extent, but thinly peopled, for the population was but little more than one hundred and sixty thousand. It had been settled by men of various races, who, upon the sea-shore, and through the remote valleys, and in the primeval wilderness, cherished the freedom that they brought and transmitted to their children. But the colony lacked that homogeneity of population which produces general sympathy of conviction and concert of action; which gives a community one soul, one heart, one hand, interprets every man's thought to his neighbor, and explains so much of the great deeds of the Grecian commonwealths, of Switzerland, and of Old and New England. In New York, also, were the hereditary manors—vast domains of a few families, private principalities, with feudal relations and traditions—and the spirit of a splendid proprietary life was essentially hostile to doctrines of popular right and power. In the magnificent territory of the Mohawk and its tributaries Sir William Johnson, amid his family and dependants, lived in baronial state among the Indians, with whom he was allied by marriage, and to whom he was the vicar of their royal father



over the sea. The Johnsons were virtually supreme in the country of the Mohawk, and, as they were intensely loyal, the region west of Albany became a dark and bloody ground of civil strife. In the city of New York, and in the neighboring counties of Westchester upon the river and sound, of Richmond upon the bay, and Queens and Suffolk on the sea, the fear that sprang from conscious exposure to the naval power of Great Britain, the timidity of commercial trade, the natural loyalty of numerous officers of the crown, all combined to foster antipathy to any disturbance of that established authority which secured order and peace.

But deeper and stronger than all other causes was the tender reluctance of Englishmen in America to believe that reconciliation with the mother-country was impossible. Even after the great day on Bunker Hill, when, in full sight of his country and of all future America, Joseph Warren, the well-beloved disciple of American liberty, fell, Congress, while justifying war, recoiled from declaring independence. Doubtless the voice of John Adams of Massachusetts, counselling immediate and entire separation, spoke truly for the unanimous and fervent patriotism of New England; but doubtless, also, the voice of John Jay of New York, who knew the mingled sentiment of the great province whose position in the struggle must be decisive, in advising one more appeal to the king, was a voice of patriotism as pure, and of courage as unquailing.

The appeal was made, and made in vain. The

year that opened with Concord and Lexington ended with the gloomy tragedy of the Canada campaign. On the last day of the year, in a tempest of sleet and snow, the combined forces of New England and New York made a desperate, futile onset; and the expedition, from which Washington and the country had anticipated results so inspiring, was dashed in pieces against the walls of Quebec. The country mourned, but New York had a peculiar sorrow. Leaving his tranquil and beautiful home upon this river, one of her noblest soldiers—brave, honorable, gentle—the son-in-law of Livingston, the friend of Schuyler, after a brief career of glory, died the death of a hero. "You shall not blush for your Montgomery," he said to his bride, as he left her. For fifty years a widow, his bride saw him no more. But while this stately river flows through the mountains to the sea, its waves will still proudly murmur the name, and recall the romantic and heroic story, of Richard Montgomery.

The year 1776 was not less gloomy for the American cause. Late in November, Washington was hurriedly retreating across New Jersey, pursued by Cornwallis, his army crumbling with every step, the State paralyzed with terror, Congress flying affrighted from Philadelphia to Baltimore, and the apparent sole remaining hope of American independence, the rigor of winter, snow, and impassable roads. Ah, no! It was not in winter, but in summer, that that hope lay; not in the relentless frost of the elements, but in the heavenly fire of hearts beating high with patriotic resolve, and turning the snow-flakes of that terrible



retreat into immortal roses of victory and joy. While Howe and his officers, in the warm luxury and wild debauchery of the city they had captured, believing the war ended, gayly sang and madly caroused, Washington, in the dreary Christmas evening, turned on the ice of the Delaware, and struck the Hessians fatally at Trenton; then, in the cold January sunrise, defeating the British at Princeton, his army filed with bleeding feet into the highlands of New Jersey, and, half starved and scantily clothed, encamped upon the frozen hills of Morristown. "The Americans have done much," said despairingly one of their truest friends in England, Edmund Burke, "but it is now evident that they cannot look standing armies in the face." That, however, was to be determined by the campaign of 1777.

For that campaign England was already preparing. Seven years before, General Carleton, who still commanded in Canada, had proposed to hold the water-line between the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Bay of New York, to prevent a separation of the colonies. It was now proposed to hold it to compel a separation. The ocean mouths of the great waterway were both in complete possession of the crown. It was an historic war-path. Here had raged the prolonged conflict between France and England for the control of the continent, and in fierce war upon the waters of New York, no less than on the Plains of Abraham, the power of France in America finally fell. Here, also, where it had humbled its proud rival, the strong hand of England, grasping for unjust dominion, was to be tri-

umphantly shaken off. This region was still a wilderness. Seventy years before, the first legal land title in it was granted. In 1745, thirty years before the Revolution, it was the extreme English outpost. In 1777 the settlers were few, and they feared the bear and the catamount less than the Tory and the Indian. They still built block-houses for retreat and defence, like the first New England settlers a hundred and fifty years before. Nowhere during the Revolution were the horrors of civil war so constant and so dire as here. The Tories seized and harassed, shot and hung the Whigs, stole their stock and store, burned their barns and ruined their crops, and the Whigs remorselessly retaliated. The stealthy Indian struck, shrieked, and vanished. The wolf and the wild-cat lurked in the thicket. Man and beast were equally cruel. Terror overhung the fated region, and, as the great invasion approached, the universal flight and devastation recalled the grim desolation in Germany during the thirty years' war.

Of that invasion, and of the campaign of 1777, the central figure is John Burgoyne. No name among the British generals of the Revolution is more familiar, yet he was neither a great soldier nor a great man. He was willing to bribe his old comrade in arms, Charles Lee, to betray the American cause, and he threatened to loose savages upon the Americans for defending it. Burgoyne was an admirable type of the English fashionable gentleman of his day. The grandson of a baronet, a Westminster boy, and trained to arms, he eloped with a daughter of the great Whig house of Derby,



left the army, and lived gayly on the Continent. Restored to a military career by political influence, he served as a captain in France, and, returning to England, was elected to Parliament. He went a brigadier to Portugal, and led a brilliant charge at Valencia de Alcantara, was complimented by the great Count Lippe, and flattered by the British prime-minister. For his gallantry the king of Spain gave him a diamond ring, and with that blazing on his finger he returned once more to England, flushed with brief glory. There for some years he was a man of pleasure. He wrote slight verses and little plays that are forgotten. Reynolds painted his portrait in London, as Ramsay had painted it in Rome. Horace Walpole sneered at him for his plays, but Lord Chatham praised him for his military notes. Tall and handsome, graceful and winning in manner, allied to a noble house, a favorite at court and on parade, he was a gay companion at the table, the club, and the theatre. The king admired his dragoons, and conferred upon him profitable honors, which secured to him a refined and luxurious life. In Parliament, when the American war began, Burgoyne took the high British ground, but with the urbanity of a soldier; and he gladly obeyed the summons to service in America, and sailed with Howe and Clinton on the great day that the British troops marched to Concord. He saw the battle of Bunker Hill, and praised the American courage and military ability, but was very sure that trained troops would always overcome militia. The one American whom he extolled was Samuel Adams. He thought that he combined the ability of

Cæsar with the astuteness of Cromwell, that he led Franklin and all the other leaders, and that if his counsels continued to control the continent, America must be subdued or relinquished.

Burgoyne saw little actual service in this country until he arrived at Quebec on May 6, 1777, as commander of the great enterprise of the year. The plan of campaign was large and simple. One expedition, led by Burgoyne, was to force its way from Quebec to Albany, through the valley of the Hudson; and another, under St. Leger, was to push through the valley of the Mohawk to the same point. At Albany they were to join General Howe, who would advance up the river from the bay. By the success of these combined operations, the British would command New York, and New England would be absolutely cut off. This last result alone would be a signal triumph. New England was the nest of rebellion. There were the fields where British power was first defied in arms. There were the Green Mountains, from which Ethan Allen and his boys had streamed upon Ticonderoga. There was Boston Bay, where the tea had been scattered, and Narragansett Bay, where the *Gaspe* had been burned, and the harbors of Machias and of Newport, from which British ships had been chased to sea. There were Faneuil Hall and the town-meeting. There was Boston, whose port had been closed—Boston, with the street of the massacre—Boston, of which King George had bitterly said that he would "as lief fight the Bostonians as the French." There were the pulpits which preached what Samuel Adams called liberty, and Samuel John-



son sedition. The very air of New England was full of defiance. The woods rustled it, the waters murmured it, the stern heart of its rugged nature seemed to beat in unison with the stout heart of man, and all throbbed together with the invincible Anglo-Saxon instinct of liberty. To cut off New England from her sisters—to seize and hold the great New York valleys of Champlain and the Hudson—was to pierce the heart of the rebellion and to paralyze America. Here, then, was to be the crucial struggle. Here in New York once more the contest for the Western continent was to be decided. Burgoyne had airily said in London that with an army of ten thousand men he could promenade through America, and now the brilliant gentleman was to make good his boast.

While he was crossing the ocean to begin his task, and when every possible effort should have been made by Congress to meet the ample and splendid preparations for the British invasion, wretched intrigues displaced General Schuyler in the northern department, and it was not until late in May that he was restored to the command. The peril was at hand, but it was impossible to collect men. By the end of June, the entire garrison of Ticonderoga and Fort Independence, the first great barrier against the advance of Burgoyne, consisted of twenty-five hundred continentals and nine hundred militia, barefooted and ragged, without proper arms or sufficient blankets, and lacking every adequate preparation for defence. But more threatening than all was Sugar-loaf Hill, rising above Ticonderoga, and completely commanding the fort. General Schuyler

saw it, but even while he pointed out the danger, and while General St. Clair, the commandant of the post, declared that, from the want of troops, nothing could be done, the drums of Burgoyne's army were joyfully beating in the summer dawn ; the bugles rang, the cannon thundered, the rising June sun shone on the scarlet coats of British grenadiers, on the bright helmets of German dragoons, and on burnished artillery and polished arms. There were more than seven thousand trained and veteran troops, besides Canadians and Indians. They were admirably commanded and equipped, although the means of land transport were fatally insufficient. But all was hope and confidence. The battle-flags were unfurled, the word was given, and, with every happy augury, the royal standard of England proudly set forward for conquest. On July 1st, the brilliant pageant swept up Lake Champlain, and the echoes of the mighty wilderness which had answered the guns of Amherst and the drum-beat of Montcalm saluted the frigates and the gunboats that, led by a dusky swarm of Indians in bark canoes, stretched between the eastern shore, along which Riedesel and the Germans marched, and the main body advancing with Phillips upon the west. The historic waters of Champlain have never seen a spectacle more splendid than the advancing army of Burgoyne. But so with his glittering Asian hordes, two thousand years before, the Persian king advanced to Salamis.

At evening the British army was before Ticonderoga. The trained eye of the English engineers instantly saw the advantage of Sugar-loaf, the higher hill, and the



rising sun of July 5th glared, in the amazed eyes of the Ticonderoga garrison, on the redcoats intrenched upon Sugar-loaf, with their batteries commanding every point within the fort, and their glasses every movement. Sugar-loaf had become Mount Defiance. St. Clair had no choice. All day he assumed indifference, but quietly made every preparation, and before dawn the next day he stole away. The moon shone, but his flight was undetected, until the flames of a fire foolishly set to a house suddenly flashed over the landscape and revealed his retreat. He was instantly pursued. His rear-guard was overtaken, and by the valor of its fierce but hopeless fight gave an undying name to the wooded hills of Hubbardton.

Ticonderoga fell, and the morning of its fall was the high hour of Burgoyne's career. Without a blow, by the mere power of his presence, he had undone the electric deed of Ethan Allen; he had captured the historic prize of famous campaigns. The chief obstruction to his triumphal American promenade had fallen. The bright promise of the invasion would be fulfilled, and Burgoyne would be the lauded hero of the war. Doubtless his handsome lip curled in amused disdain at the flying and frightened militia—plough-boys that might infest, but could not impede, his further advance. His eager fancy could picture the delight of London, the joy of the clubs, of Parliament, of the king. He could almost hear the royal George bursting into the queen's room and shouting, "I have beat all the Americans." He could almost read the assurance of the minister to the proud earl, his father-in-law, that the



king designed for him the vacant red ribbon. But his aspiring ambition surely anticipated a loftier reward—a garter, a coronet, and at last, Westminster Abbey and undying glory.

Ticonderoga fell, and with it, apparently, fell in Europe all hope of the patriot cause; and in America, all confidence and happy expectation. The Tories were jubilant. The wavering Indians were instantly open enemies. The militia sullenly went home. The solitary settlers fled southward through the forests and over the eastern hills. Even Albany was appalled, and its pale citizens sent their families away. Yet this panic-stricken valley of the upper Hudson was now the field on which, if anywhere, the cause was to be saved. Five counties of the State were in the hands of the enemy; three were in anarchy. Schuyler was at Fort Edward with scarcely a thousand men. The weary army of St. Clair, shrunken to fifteen hundred continentals, all the militia having dropped away, struggled for a week through the forest, and emerged forlorn and exhausted at the fort. Other troops arrived, but the peril was imminent. New York was threatened at every point, and, with less than five thousand ill-equipped regulars and militia to oppose the victorious Burgoyne, who was but a single long day's march away, with only the forts and the boom and chain in the Highlands to stay Clinton's ascent from the bay, and only the little garrison at Fort Stanwix to withstand St. Leger, General Schuyler and the council of state implored aid from every quarter. A loud clamor, bred of old jealousy and fresh disappointment, arose against Schuyler,

the commander of the department, and St. Clair, the commander of the post. The excitement and dismay were universal, and the just apprehension was most grave. But when the storm was loudest it was pierced by the calm voice of Washington, whose soul quailed before no disaster: "We should never despair; our situation has before been unpromising and has changed for the better; so I trust it will be again." He sent Arnold to Schuyler, as an accomplished officer familiar with the country. He urged the Eastern States to move to his succor. He ordered all available boats from Albany to New Windsor and Fishkill, upon the Hudson, to be ready for any part of his own army that he might wish to detach. While thus the commander-in-chief cared for all, each cared for itself. The stout-hearted George Clinton and the council of New York were thoroughly aroused and alert. Vermont called upon New Hampshire, and the White Mountains answered to the Green by summoning Stark and Whipple, who, gathering their men, hastened to the Hudson.

While this wild panic and alarm swept through the country, Burgoyne remained for a fortnight at the head of Lake Champlain. He, also, had his troubles. He was forced to garrison Ticonderoga from his serviceable troops. His Indian allies began to annoy him. Provisions came in slowly, and the first fatal weakness of the expedition was already betrayed in the inadequate supply of wagons and horses. But the neighboring Tories joined him, and, counting upon the terror that his triumphant progress had inspired, he moved, at the end of July, from Lake Champlain towards the Hudson.



His march was through the wilderness, which Schuyler had desolated to the utmost, breaking up the roads, choking with trees the navigable streams, destroying forage, and driving away cattle. But Burgoyne forced his way through, building forty bridges and laying a log-wood road for two miles across a morass. The confidence of triumph cheered the way. So sure was victory that, as if it had been a huge pleasure party, the wives of officers accompanied the camp, and the Baroness Riedesel came in a calash from Fort George to join her husband with Burgoyne. But before that slowly toiling army the startled frontier country fled. Almost every patriot house west of the Green Mountains and north of Manchester was deserted. The Tories, proud of British protection, placed signs in their hats, and before their doors, and upon the horns of their cattle, wearing the Tory badge as Gurth wore the collar of Cedric the Saxon. To us the scene is romantic picture. The scarlet host of Burgoyne flashes through the forest with pealing music; the soldiers smooth the rough way with roystering songs; the trains and artillery toil slowly on; the red cloud of savages glimmers on his skirts, driving before him farmers with wives and children, faint and sick with cruel apprehension, flying through a land of terror. To us it is picture. But, to know what it truly was, let the happy farmer on these green slopes and placid meadows imagine a sudden flight to-night with all he loves from all he owns, struggling up steep hills, lost in tangled woods, crowding along difficult roads; at every step expecting the glistening tomahawk, the bullet, and the mercies of



a foreign soldiery. Not many miles from this spot the hapless Jane MacCrea was killed as Burgoyne's savages hurried her away. Her story rang through the land like a woman's cry of agony. This, then, was British chivalry! Burgoyne, indeed, had not meant murder, but he had threatened it. The name of the innocent girl became the rallying-cry for armies, and to a thousand indignant hearts her blood cried from the ground for vengeance. We come with song and speech and proud commemoration to celebrate the triumph of this day. Let us not forget the cost of that triumph, the infinite suffering that this unchanging sky beheld—the torture of men, the heart-break of women, the terror of little children—that paid for the happiness which we enjoy.

Burgoyne reached the Hudson unattacked. As he arrived, although he had no tidings from below, he heard of the successful advance in the valley of the Mohawk. St. Leger had reached Fort Stanwix without the loss of a man. It was necessary, therefore, for Burgoyne to hasten to make his junction at Albany with Howe and St. Leger, and on August 6th he sent word to Howe that he hoped to be in Albany by the 22d. But, even as he wrote, the blow fatal to his hopes was struck. On that very day the patriots of Tryon County, men of German blood, led by Nicholas Herkimer, were hastening to the relief of Fort Stanwix, which St. Leger had beleaguered. The tale has just been eloquently told to fifty thousand children of the Mohawk valley gathered on the field of Oriskany, and it will be told to their children's children so long as the grass of that field shall

grow and the waters of the Mohawk flow. In the hot summer morning, Herkimer and his men marched under the peaceful trees into the deadly ambush, and in the depth of the defile were suddenly enveloped in a storm of fire and death. Ah, blood-red field of Oriskany! For five doubtful, desperate hours, without lines or fort or artillery, hand to hand, with knife and rifle, with tomahawk and spear, swaying and struggling, slipping in blood and stumbling over dead bodies, raged the most deadly battle of the war. Full of heroic deeds, full of precious memories; a sacrifice that was not lost. The stars that shone at evening over the field saw the Indian and the white man stark and stiff, still locked in the death-grapple, still clenching the hair of the foe, still holding the dripping knife in his breast. The brave Herkimer, fatally wounded, called for his Bible and tranquilly died. He did not relieve the fort, but it held out until Benedict Arnold, sent by Schuyler, coming up the valley, craftily persuaded St. Leger's Indians that his men were as the leaves of the forest for number. The savages fled; St. Leger's force melted away; the Mohawk expedition had wholly failed, and the right hand of Burgoyne was shattered.

Every day lost to the English general was now a disaster. But his fatal improvidence forced him to inaction. He could not move without supplies of food and horses, and an expedition to secure them would also serve as a diversion to favor St. Leger. Three days after Oriskany, and before he had heard of that battle, Burgoyne detached the expedition to Bennington. New England was ready for him there, as New York had been



at Stanwix. Parson Allen from Pittsfield came in his chaise. Everybody else came as he could, and when the British advance was announced, John Stark marched his militia just over the line of New York, where the enemy was intrenched on the uplands of the Walloom-sic, and, skilfully surrounding them, the Yankee farmers, who had hurried away from their summer work, swept up the hill with fiery and resistless fury, seized the blazing guns, and drove the veteran troops as if they were wolves and wild-cats threatening their farms; and after a lull, renewing the onset against fresh foes, the New England militia won the famous battle of Bennington, and the left hand of Burgoyne was shattered.

So soon was the splendid promise of Ticonderoga darkened. The high and haughty tone was changed. "I yet do not despond," wrote Burgoyne on August the 20th, and he had not yet heard of St. Leger's fate. But he had reason to fear. The glad light of Bennington and Oriskany had pierced the gloom that weighed upon the country. It was everywhere jubilant and everywhere rising. The savages deserted the British camp. The harvest was gathered, and while New England and New York had fallen fatally upon the flanks of Burgoyne, Washington now sent Virginia to join New York and New England in his front, detaching from his own army Morgan and his men, the most famous rifle-corps of the Revolution. But while the prospect brightened, General Schuyler, by order of Congress, was superseded by General Gates. Schuyler, a most sagacious and diligent officer, whom Washington wholly trusted, was removed for the alleged want of his most



obvious quality, the faculty of comprehensive organization. But the New England militia disliked him, and even Samuel Adams was impatient of him; but Samuel Adams was also impatient of Washington. Public irritation with the situation, and jealous intrigue in camp and in Congress, procured Schuyler's removal. He was wounded to the heart, but his patriotism did not waver. He remained in camp to be of what service he could, and he entreated Congress to order a speedy and searching inquiry into his conduct. It was at last made, and left him absolutely unstained. He was unanimously acquitted with the highest honor, and Congress approved the verdict. General Schuyler did not again enter upon active military service, but he and Rufus King were the first senators that New York sent to the Senate of the United States. Time has restored his fame, and the history of his State records no more patriotic name among her illustrious sons than that which is commemorated by this village, the name of Philip Schuyler.

Largely reinforced, Gates, on September the 12th, advanced to Bemis's Heights, which the young Kosciusko had fortified, and there he awaited Burgoyne's approach. Burgoyne's orders had left him no discretion. He must force his way to Albany. With soldierly loyalty, therefore, he must assume that Howe was pushing up the Hudson, and that his own delay might imperil Howe by permitting the Americans to turn suddenly upon him. On September the 11th, he announced to his camp that he had sent the lake fleet to Canada, that he had virtually abandoned his communi-

cations, and that his army must fight its way or perish. On the 13th he crossed the Hudson, and then received his first tidings from Howe, in a letter from him written long before, and which did not even mention a junction. Burgoyne had already felt himself deserted, if not betrayed, and he comprehended his critical situation. Howe was on the Delaware, and Carleton would give him no aid from Canada. The country behind him was already swarming with militia. He was encamped in a dense forest, with an enemy hidden in the same forest before him, whose drum-beat and morning gun he could hear, but whose numbers and position he did not know. Yet, while he could see nothing, every movement of his own was noted by an eagle eye in a tree-top on the eastern side of the Hudson, and reported to Gates. And when at last Burgoyne marched out in full array, with all the glittering pomp of war, to find the foe in the forest, Gates instantly knew it. Burgoyne boldly advanced, his communication with Canada gone, the glory of Ticonderoga dimmed, the union with Howe uncertain, disaster on the right hand and on the left, the peerage and Westminster Abbey both fading from hope—and he suddenly confronted breastworks, artillery, and an eager army. He must fight or fly, nor did he hesitate. At eleven o'clock on the morning of September the 19th, he advanced in three columns towards Gates's lines on Bemis's Heights. At one o'clock the action began; at four it was general and desperate; at five, Burgoyne's army was in mortal peril; at nightfall the Germans had stayed the fatal blow, and the battle ended. Both sides claimed the victory, and the British



bivouacked on the field. As on Bunker Hill—the first battle in America which Burgoyne had seen—if this were a British victory another would destroy the British army.

Burgoyne huddled his dead into the ground, hastily entrenched and fortified a new position, soothed his discouraged army, and meditated a fresh assault. But receiving the good news of Howe's success at the Brandywine, and of the immediate advance of Clinton to break through the highlands of the Hudson and fall upon the rear of Gates, he decided to wait. He was encamped in the wilderness without communications, but he sent word to Clinton that he could hold out until the 12th of October. Again through the forest he heard the morning and evening gun, and the shouting of the American camp, and once the joyful firing of cannon that he could not understand, but which announced American victories in his rear. The alarm of the British camp was constant. The picket-firing was incessant. Officers and men slept in their clothes. Rations were reduced, and the hungry army heard every night the howling of the wolves that haunted the outskirts of the camp, as if making ready for their prey. At last, with provisions for sixteen days only, and no news from Clinton, Burgoyne summoned his generals for a final council. It was the evening of October the 5th, and, could he but have known it, Howe at Germantown had again succeeded, and Sir Henry Clinton was just breaking his way through the Highlands, victorious and desolating. On the very morning that Burgoyne fought his fatal battle, the river forts had fallen, the boom and



chain were cleared away, the marauding British fleet sailed into Newburgh Bay, Clinton sent word gayly to Burgoyne, "Here we are! nothing between us and Albany," while Putnam was hastening up along the eastern bank and George Clinton along the western, rousing the country and rallying the flying citizens from their alarm. Of all this Burgoyne knew nothing. In his extremity, his own plan was to leave boats, provisions, and magazines, for three or four days, and, falling upon the left of the Americans, to attempt to gain the rear. The German General Riedesel advised falling back towards the lake. The English Fraser was willing to fight. The English Phillips was silent. Compelled to decide, Burgoyne at last determined to reconnoitre the Americans in force, and if he thought that an attack would be unwise, then to retreat towards the lake.

On the morning of October the 7th, at ten o'clock, fifteen hundred of the best troops in the world led by four of the most experienced and accomplished generals, with a skirmishing van of Canadian rangers and Indians, moved in three columns towards the left of the American position into a field of wheat. They began to cut forage. Startled by the rattling picket-fire, the American drums beat to arms, and the British approach was announced at headquarters. Morgan and the Virginia sharpshooters were thrown out beyond the British right. Poor, with the New York and New Hampshire men, moved steadily through the woods towards the British left, which began the battle with a vigorous cannonade. The Americans dashed forward, opened to the right and left, flanked the enemy, struck him with a

blasting fire, then closed, and, grappling hand to hand, the mad mass of combatants swayed and staggered for half an hour, five times taking and re-taking a single gun. At the first fire upon the left, the Virginia sharpshooters, shouting, and blazing with deadly aim, rushed forward with such fury that the appalled British right wavered and recoiled. While it yet staggered under the blow of Virginia, New England swept up, and with its flaming muskets broke the English line, which wildly fled. It re-formed and again advanced, while the whole American force dashed against the British centre, held by the Germans, whose right and left had been uncovered. The Germans bravely stood, and the British General Fraser hurried to their aid. He seemed upon the British side the inspiring genius of the day. With fatal aim an American sharp-shooter fired and Fraser fell. With him sank the British heart. Three thousand New-Yorkers, led by Ten Broeck, came freshly up, and the whole American line, jubilant with certain victory, advancing, Burgoyne abandoned his guns and ordered a retreat to his camp. It was but fifty-two minutes since the action began. The British, dismayed, bewildered, overwhelmed, were scarcely within their redoubts when Benedict Arnold, to whom the jealous Gates, who did not come upon the field during the day, had refused a command—outriding an aid whom Gates had sent to recall him, came spurring up—Benedict Arnold, whose name America does not love, whose ruthless will had dragged the doomed Canadian Expedition through the starving wilderness of Maine; who, volunteering to relieve Fort Stanwix, had, by the mere terror of his com-



ing, blown St. Leger away, and who, on September 19, had saved the American left—Benedict Arnold, whom battle stung to fury, now whirled from end to end of the American line, hurled it against the Great Redoubt, driving the enemy at the point of the bayonet; then, flinging himself to the extreme right, and finding there the Massachusetts brigade, swept it with him to the assault, and streaming over the breastworks, scattered the Brunswickers who defended them, killed their colonel, and gained and held the point which commanded the entire British position, while at the same moment his horse was shot under him, and he sank to the ground wounded in the leg that had been wounded at Quebec. Here, upon the Hudson, where he tried to betray his country; here, upon the spot where, in the crucial hour of the Revolution, he illustrated and led the American valor that made us free and great, knowing well that no earlier service can atone for a later crime, let us recall, for one brief instant of infinite pity, the name that has been justly execrated for a century.

Night fell, and the weary fighters slept. Before day dawned Burgoyne, exhausted and overwhelmed, drew off the remainder of his army, and the Americans occupied his camp. All day the lines exchanged a sharp fire. At evening, in a desolate autumn rain, having buried solemnly, amid the flash and rattle of bombs and artillery, his gallant friend Fraser, leaving his sick and wounded to the mercies of the foe, Burgoyne, who, in the splendid hour of his first advance had so proudly proclaimed, "This army must not retreat," turned to fly. He moved until nearly daybreak, then



rested from the slow and toilsome march until towards sunset, and on the evening of the 9th crossed Fish Creek and bivouacked in the open air. A more vigorous march—but it was impracticable—would have given him the heights of Saratoga, and secured the passage of the river. But everywhere he was too late. The American sharpshooters hovered around him, cutting off supplies and preventing him from laying roads. There was, indeed, one short hour of hope that Gates, mistaking the whole British army for its flying rear-guard, would expose himself to a destructive ambush and assault. When the snare was discovered, the last hope of Burgoyne vanished, and, unable to stir, he sat down grimly north of the creek, where his army, wasted to thirty-four hundred effective men, was swiftly and completely encircled by the Americans, who commanded it at every point, and harassed it with shot and shell. Gates, with the confidence of overpowering numbers, purposely avoided battle. Burgoyne, deserted by his allies, his army half gone, with less than five days' food, with no word from Clinton, with no chance of escape, prepared honorably to surrender.

On October 14, he proposed a cessation of arms to arrange terms of capitulation. His agent, Lieutenant-Colonel Kingston, was received at the crossing of the creek by Adjutant-General Wilkinson, and was conducted by him, blindfold, to General Gates. Gates's terms required an unconditional surrender of the army as prisoners of war. Burgoyne, anxious to save his army to the king for service elsewhere, insisted that it should be returned to England, under engagement not

to serve again in North America during the war. Gates had no wish to prolong the negotiations. He had heard from Putnam that the English army and fleet were triumphantly sweeping up the river, and that he must expect "the worst," and he therefore hastened to accept the proposition of Burgoyne. But Washington, with his Fabian policy, scorned even by Samuel and John Adams, had made "the worst" impossible. Hanging upon the army of Howe, engaging it, although unsuccessfully, at the Brandywine and at Germantown, he had perplexed, delayed, and disconcerted the British general, gaining the time which was the supreme necessity for success against Burgoyne. By reason of Washington's operations, Howe could not strengthen Clinton, as they both had expected, and Clinton could not move until his slow reinforcements from over the sea arrived. When they came, he burst through the Highlands indeed, with fire and pillage, and hastened to fall upon the rear of Gates. But before he could reach him, while still forty miles away, he heard the astounding news of Burgoyne's surrender, and he dropped down the river sullenly, back to New York—he, too, baffled by the vigilance, the wariness, the supreme self-command of Washington.

For a moment, when Burgoyne heard of Clinton's success, he thought to avoid surrender. But it was too late. He could not, honorably, recall his word. At nine o'clock on the morning of this day, a hundred years ago, he signed the convention. At eleven o'clock his troops marched to this meadow, the site of old Fort Hardy, and, with tears coursing down bearded



cheeks, with passionate sobs, and oaths of rage and defiance, the soldiers kissing their guns with the tenderness of lovers, or with sudden frenzy knocking off the butts of their muskets, and the drummers stamping on their drums, the king's army laid down their arms. No American eyes, except those of Morgan Lewis and James Wilkinson, aids of General Gates, beheld the surrender. As the British troops filed afterwards between the American lines, they saw no sign of exultation, but they heard the drums and fifes playing "Yankee Doodle." A few minutes later Burgoyne and his suite rode to the headquarters of Gates. The English general, as if for a court holiday, glittered in scarlet and gold; Gates, plainly clad in a blue overcoat, attended by General Schuyler in citizen's dress, who had come to congratulate him, and by his proud and happy staff, received his guest with urbane courtesy. They exchanged the compliments of soldiers. "The fortune of war, General Gates, has made me your prisoner." Gates gracefully replied, "I shall always be ready to testify that it has not been through any fault of your excellency." The generals entered the tent of Gates and dined together. With the same courtly compliment the English general toasted General Washington, the American general toasted the king. Then, as the English army, without artillery or arms, approached on their march to the sea, the two generals stepped out in front of the tent, and standing together conspicuous upon this spot, in full view of the Americans and of the British army, General Burgoyne drew his sword, bowed, and pre-



sented it to General Gates. General Gates bowed, received the sword, and returned it to General Burgoyne.

Such was the simple ceremony that marked the turning-point of the Revolution. All the defeats, indeed, all the struggles, the battles, the sacrifices, the sufferings, at all times and in every colony, were indispensable to the great result. Concord, Lexington, Bunker Hill, Moultrie, Long Island, Trenton, Oriskany, Bennington, the Brandywine, Germantown, Saratoga, Monmouth, Camden, Cowpens, Guilford, Eutaw Springs, Yorktown—what American does not kindle as he calls the glorious battle-roll of the Revolution.—whether victories or defeats, are all essential lights and shades in the immortal picture. But as, gratefully acknowledging the service of all the patriots, we yet call Washington father, so, mindful of the value of every event, we may agree that the defeat of Burgoyne determined American independence. Thenceforth it was but a question of time. The great doubt was solved. Out of a rural militia an army could be trained to cope at every point successfully with the most experienced and disciplined troops in the world. In the first bitter moment of his defeat, Burgoyne generously wrote to a military friend, “A better-armed, a better-bodied, a more alert or better-prepared army, in all essential points of military institution, I am afraid is not to be found on our side of the question.” The campaign in New York, also, where the loyalists were strongest, had shown, what was afterwards constantly proved, that the British crown, despite the horrors of Cherry Valley and

Wyoming, could not count upon general or effective aid from the Tories or from the Indians. At last it was plain that, if Britain would conquer, she must overrun and crush the continent, and that was impossible. The shrewdest men in England and in Europe saw it. Lord North himself, King George's chief minister, owned it, and grieved in his blind old age that he had not followed his conviction. Edmund Burke would have made peace on any terms. Charles Fox exclaimed that the ministers knew as little how to make peace as war. The Duke of Richmond urged the impossibility of conquest, and the historian Gibbon, who in Parliament had voted throughout the war as Dr. Johnson would have done, agreed that America was lost. The king of France ordered Franklin to be told that he should support the cause of the United States. In April he sent a fleet to America, and from that time to the end of the war the French and the Americans battled together on sea and land, until on this very day, October 17, 1781, four years after the disaster of Burgoyne, Cornwallis, on the plains of Yorktown, proposed a surrender to the combined armies of France and the United States. The terms were settled upon our part jointly by an American and a French officer, while Washington and Lafayette stood side by side as the British laid down their arms. It was the surrender of Burgoyne that determined the French alliance, and the French alliance secured the final triumph.

It is the story of a hundred years ago. It has been ceaselessly told by sire to son, along this valley and



through this land. The later attempt of the same foe, and the bright day of victory at Plattsburg on the lake, renewed and confirmed the old hostility. Alienation of feeling between the parent country and the child became traditional, and on both sides of the sea a narrow prejudice survives, and still sometimes seeks to kindle the embers of that wasted fire. But here and now we stand upon the grave of old enmities. Hostile breastwork and redoubt are softly hidden under grass and grain; shot and shell and every deadly missile are long since buried deep beneath our feet, and from the mouldering dust of mingled foemen springs all the varied verdure that makes this scene so fair. While nature tenderly and swiftly repairs the ravages of war, we suffer no hostility to linger in our hearts. Two months ago the British governor-general of Canada was invited to meet the President of the United States, at Bennington, in happy commemoration, not of a British defeat, but of a triumph of English liberty. So, upon this famous and decisive field, let every unworthy feeling perish! Here, to the England that we fought, let us now, grown great and strong with a hundred years, hold out the hand of fellowship and peace! Here, where the English Burgoyne, in the very moment of his bitter humiliation, generously pledged George Washington, let us, in our high hour of triumph, of power, and of hope, pledge the queen! Here, in the grave of brave and unknown foemen, may mutual jealousies and doubts and animosities lie buried forever! Henceforth, revering their common glorious traditions, may England and America press always forward, side by



side, in noble and inspiring rivalry to promote the welfare of man!

Fellow-citizens, with the story of Burgoyne's surrender—the Revolutionary glory of the State of New York—still fresh in our memories, amid these thousands of her sons and daughters, whose hearts glow with lofty pride, I am glad that the hallowed spot on which we stand compels us to remember not only the imperial State, but the national commonwealth whose young hands here together struck the blow, and on whose older head descends the ample benediction of the victory. On yonder heights, a hundred years ago, Virginia lay encamped. Beyond, and farther to the north, watched New Hampshire and Vermont. Here, in the wooded uplands at the south, stood New Jersey and New York; while across the river to the east, Connecticut and Massachusetts closed the triumphant line. Here was the symbol of the Revolution—a common cause, a common strife, a common triumph; the cause, not of a class, but of human nature; the triumph, not of a colony, but of United America. And we who stand here proudly remembering; we who have seen Virginia and New York—the North and the South—more bitterly hostile than the armies whose battles shook this ground; we who have mutually proved in deadlier conflict the constancy and the courage of all the States—which, proud to be peers, yet own no master but their united selves—we renew our heart's imperishable devotion to the common American faith, the common American pride, the common American glory. Here Americans stood and triumphed. Here Amer-

icans stand and bless their memory. And here, for a thousand years, may grateful generations of Americans come to rehearse the glorious story, and to rejoice in a supreme and benignant American Nationality!

VII

THE UNVEILING OF THE STATUE OF WASH-  
INGTON

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE UNVEILING OF THE STATUE  
OF WASHINGTON, UPON THE SPOT WHERE HE TOOK THE  
OATH AS FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,  
ON THE (25TH) 26TH NOVEMBER, 1883, THE  
ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
EVACUATION OF THE CITY OF NEW  
YORK BY THE BRITISH ARMY



The first Congress of the United States assembled in Federal Hall, in New York, on the 4th day of March, 1789, but there was not a quorum present; and it was not until the 30th day of April following that the organization of the government established under the Constitution was completed by the inauguration of Washington as President.

To commemorate this event, the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York undertook, in 1880, to secure the erection of a statue of Washington on the steps of the Sub-Treasury building, which stands upon the site formerly occupied by Federal Hall, on the corner of Wall and Nassau streets. The commission to make the statue was given to Mr. J. Q. A. Ward.

The celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the evacuation of New York by the British army on November 25, 1783, when General Washington entered the city, after its long occupation by hostile forces, was chosen as an appropriate time for the unveiling of the statue, its tender to the custody of the general government, and its formal acceptance by the President of the United States.

On Monday, November 26, 1883, the statue was unveiled with appropriate ceremonies, and the following address was delivered.

## THE UNVEILING OF THE STATUE OF WASHINGTON

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THE great series of Revolutionary centennial celebrations ends fitly upon this day and upon this spot. The momentous events that marked the opening, the culmination, and the close of the conflict, have been duly commemorated, and for eight years the full-stretched memory of the country, a harp of a thousand strings, swept by patriotic emotion, has resounded with the heroic music of the Revolutionary story. To-day the Revolutionary story ends. At this hour, a hundred years ago, the last British sentry was withdrawn. The imperial standard of Great Britain fell at the fort over which it had floated for a hundred and twenty years, and in its place the Stars and Stripes of American Independence flashed in the sun. Fleet and army, royal flag and scarlet uniform, coronet and ribbon, every sign and symbol of foreign authority which, from Concord to Saratoga, and from Saratoga to Yorktown, had sought to subdue the colonies, vanished from these shores. Colonial and provincial America had ended; national America had begun; and, after the lapse of a hundred years, the cradle-song of the hope and promise of our national na-

tivity is the triumphant pæan of our matured power and assured prosperity: Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will to men!

A more sorrowful departure history does not record. In that humiliating moment the fruit of the victories of the elder Pitt, which had girdled the globe with British glory and had supplied the pretext for taxing America, crumbled to ashes. The catastrophe was not that an English army was vanquished; it was that England was wounded. It was not a field lost; it was an empire rent asunder. It was not a blunder of military strategy; it was a moral miscalculation. As her wisest statesman had predicted, England had fallen upon her own sword; and she had drawn it against herself. In striking at her kindred in America, she struck at the political traditions, the immemorial rights, the jealous love of liberty, which are the hereditary pride of the English name; and the rustic continentals, who had defended those rights from Bunker Hill to Newburg, and who returned hither on this day a hundred years ago, marched through these streets as they had marched to the battle-fields of the Revolution, keeping step to the steady drum-beat of Cromwell's Ironsides at Worcester and Dunbar, and winning at last as great a victory for the English-speaking race. But none the less the political separation of the two countries was complete. England had declined the greatest opportunity that was ever offered to a great nation; and America, panoplied in the mighty memories of her birthright, with the sturdy self-reliance of indomitable conviction and of conscious power, turned to carry forward as a new nation,



under other conditions and through other institutions, the cardinal principles of constitutional liberty.

This day, therefore, commemorates the end of the old order, and this spot the beginning of the new. With the evacuation of New York monarchy ended; with the inauguration of Washington the national republic began. The result, indeed, had been foretold by the course of events through all the colonial period, which culminated in the total overthrow of British power. The early New England confederations—the colonial leagues against Indian hostility—William Penn's suggestion of a provincial Congress—the military association for a common interest and with a common impulse, in the old French and English wars—Franklin's scheme of union at Albany—the first doubt and distrust of British authority—the morning gun of revolution in Jonathan Mayhew's preaching—the thunderburst of James Otis's plea against the writs of assistance—the keen and fatal logic of John Morin Scott in New York, with its plain forecast of separation—the fiery warning of Patrick Henry to the king—the massacre in State Street—the Boston port-bill—the response of New York and Virginia—The Stamp-Act Congress—and at last, following the shots on Lexington Green and the volley at Concord Bridge, the varying fortune and final triumph of the contest—all these, our renowned and glorious traditions, immortal as the tale of Thermopylæ and Plataea, of Sempach and Runnymede, revealed the common American heart and conscience, the essential and instinctive unity of the colonies; and, surely and resistlessly as the revolution of

the globe through the darkness of the night turns the continent to the morning, the progressive development of the colonies brought the great consummation of American national union which consecrates this spot.

But it was accomplished only after long and anxious and arduous controversy, with doubt and apprehension and bitter hostility. The general joy that followed the evacuation of New York, the satisfaction with acknowledged independence, the glowing anticipation, the boundless hope, were succeeded by the reaction that always follows prolonged exaltation of public feeling and devoted and self-sacrificing public exertion. The young giant, indeed, had conquered, but his victory seemed to have cost him his life. Foreign authority had disappeared, but the country lay prostrate.

In the midst of our civil war, by an exquisite stroke of diplomacy, the Secretary of State invited the ministers of foreign powers to a pleasure excursion through New York, that they might witness the unabated prosperity of a single State, and report to Europe that, while the United States maintained a million of men in the field and upon the sea, there was no apparent diminution of population, no interruption of industrial activities and ordinary pursuits, and no visible drain upon seemingly exhaustless resources. But when the Revolution ended, commerce had perished, agriculture languished, and manufactures were stifled by foreign competition. The public debt was enormous, and private debt was universal. We have seen the stupendous burden of our civil war borne with cheerfulness, and regularly and continuously reduced with ease. But in the



year after the evacuation of New York, bills of the Confederation for six hundred thousand dollars were protested in Holland; and the whole requirement of the Treasury for the year, which was four millions of dollars, was universally felt to be a sum too large to demand, and which could not be collected. Taxation was resisted, State authority was defied, and the feeble and futile government of the Confederation, a mummy clad in robes of state, without power and without consideration, was scorned abroad and contemned at home.

The times that tried men's souls in this country were rather in 1786 than in 1776, for the colonial ability to win independence involved neither the righteousness of the cause nor the character of the people. The Revolution had proved their valor, and had been successfully achieved. But the new situation tested their wisdom; and without wisdom the Revolution had been in vain. By the common exertion, sacrifice, and suffering, independence had been secured, the enemy had been expelled, and the younger England of the West had humbled the crowned and unnatural mother England upon the sea-girt throne. In this critical moment neglect or ignorance of the obvious and indispensable means of securing the common safety, strength, and welfare, and the apparent revelation of American incapacity to build a national American commonwealth, might justly fill every generous and patriotic heart with dismay.

Yet if any American despaired during the gloomy years from 1783 to 1787, and doubted whether the men were equal to the task, so had John Adams doubted and despaired, on the very eve of the assembly of the Conti-



mental Congress. "We have not men fit for the times," he exclaimed; "we are deficient in genius, in education, in travel, in fortune, in everything." But scarcely had he spoken when he hastened to take his part in that immortal assembly, and to do the very thing that he feared no man was strong enough to do. Well did Jefferson call him the Colossus, for by his mighty and indomitable will he lifted the country to the Declaration of Independence. Why then doubt, since independence had been achieved, that national union was possible? The leaders of the Revolution, the chiefs of the Continental Congress, still lived. Age had not dimmed their eyes, nor chilled their hearts, nor withered their faculties. The work they had begun, surely they were ready to complete, and the men who had made the English Colonies American States were wise enough and strong enough to bind the American States into a nation.

Nay, even doubt was treachery. For still *he* lived—in the prime of glorious manhood he still lived—whose faith and constancy and courage, when patriotism despaired and hope expired, had moved before his struggling country a pillar of cloud by day, of fire by night. To think of the Revolution is to see him. The whole scene is radiant with his presence and his power. He was, indeed, but one patriot among patriots, and an ardent and general patriotism it was that marshalled minute-men and enrolled Sons of Liberty. It was a sublime popular daring that defied the British empire and made good its defiance. Doubtless the American Revolution was the work of the people, but it seems the work of a man. How can we conceive its heroic prose-

cution, its triumphant issue, without its leader? Had he fallen at Trenton; had he been captured by Clinton; had intrigues of selfish ambition prevailed against him; had he not nerved—he alone—the hesitating army at Newburg, who dare doubt that the vision of the “one far-off, divine event” that drew the country through the war would still have been fulfilled? But what American does not know, and proudly own, that the perpetual and inspiring assurance of that event, the cheer of the weary march, the joy of the victory, the confidence of Congress, the pride and hope of America, was the character of Washington?

No voice for a powerful Union was earlier or stronger or more constant than his. The fervor of his conviction kindled the faith of the country. Samuel Adams might hesitate, and Patrick Henry doubt, but Washington was sure. Union alone had won independence, union alone could secure it. Without union there was no common revenue, no common regulation of commerce, no settlement of common territory, no common bond between adjacent States. Instead of these, there were discord, anarchy, and subjugation.

Indeed, they were already at hand. While England refused to relinquish the western forts, and contemptuously demanded of John Adams some security that the separate States would not nullify the decrees of the Confederation; while Europe awaited disdainfully the dissolution of a loose and jarring league, the States themselves, pinched with poverty, jealous of Congress, withheld their contributions to the common treasury, and encountered from their own citizens armed defiance



of their own authority. The situation was intolerable. Lawlessness and license, masquerading as liberty and independence, threatened the rural republicans, as the leering satyrs in the fable deluded the simple shepherds of the plain. But the high destiny of the English-speaking race was not to be thwarted. The ancient traditions of that people, whose political genius is strong common-sense, are not of liberty only, but of constitutional liberty, and of a sagacity and skill which secure and perpetuate that liberty in adequate and flexible institutions. Devotion to liberty and loyalty to law, proceeding with equal step, have together led the race, of which Washington is the consummate flower, from the gloom of the ancient German forest to the imperial splendor of England and the republican glory of the United States. But the children of liberty are wise in their generation. There were American States after the Revolution, and there were constitutions of States. But there was no common constitution, no common guarantee both of the rights of States and the liberties of the citizens; and, in the midst of States and constitutions, State authority, and individual liberty, and the general welfare itself, were perishing.

Then as, in the passionate excitement, but uncertain movement, of the early Revolution, a paper passed mysteriously from patriotic hand to hand, firing every patriotic heart with the magic motto, "*Join or die*;" so, in the air now electric with national feeling, "*Join or die*" became the burden of the mighty chorus that rolled from out the heart of the people. It was resistless, like the demand for independence ten years before.



The convention assembled. Washington, the good genius of union, presided. Wise and heroic patriots framed the Constitution and submitted it to the people. For ten months the land shook with the great debate upon its ratification, and it was the conclusive argument for the Constitution that Washington would be the first President. In this very street Alexander Hamilton met John Lamb, the ardent leader of the Sons of Liberty, who distrusted the new scheme of government, and argued with him that fear was folly, since Washington would be the President. "Good," replied Lamb, "for to no other mortal would I intrust authority so enormous." At length the decision of the people was recorded. Eleven of the thirteen States had solemnly adopted the Constitution, and in the jubilee of joy that followed, as of a people breaking a deadly spell, opposition was silenced; and the man who, like Moses, had led his country through the Red Sea of armed strife, was summoned by the instinctive love and perfect confidence of the whole people to perform the miracle for which they waited, and, like a greater than Moses, to stretch forth his hand and raise the dead frame of national union to life.

With that manly humility and modest simplicity which always invested his greatness, like the rosy hue that suffuses the awful summit of Mont Blanc, Washington writes in his diary, on April 16, 1789: "About ten o'clock I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity, and, with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York, with the best

disposition to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectation." From State to State, from town to town, along that triumphal way from Mount Vernon, the air murmured with benedictions as he passed. Under laurelled arches and walking upon flowers, amid the music of bells, the thunder of cannon, the acclamations of the people, the singing of hymns, and the eloquence of votive addresses, Washington came at last to New York, and landed at the foot of this street, amid such joyous exultation as New York had never known. After a week had passed, the great object of his coming was to be accomplished, and on April 30, 1789, the procession attending the President moved from his house on Franklin Square, through Pearl Street to Broad, and through Broad Street to the spot upon which we are now assembled.

Among the most imposing events in history must always be accounted the simple ceremony which was transacted here. The human mind craves lofty figures for a memorable scene, and loves to decorate with fitting circumstance the fulfilment of great affairs. For this event all such conditions were satisfied. The scene was set with every ample preparation of historic significance and patriotic association, with the most eminent actors, with the most auspicious anticipation. For the occasion itself America offered no place more becoming, for no spot is more conspicuously, more honorably, or more closely identified than this with the history of American liberty. The scene around us is marvellously changed, indeed, from its aspect in the colonial, the pro-



vincial, the Revolutionary city. How transformed this street from the resort of fashion, the seat of the State government, the modest residence of merchants, diplomats, and statesmen, which was the Wall Street of a century ago! Then the social and political heart of a small and struggling community, it is now the financial nerve-centre of a continent. But if the vast competitions and contentions of capital and enterprise which involve the prosperity of States and nations have overlaid the plain scene of political strife with a field of cloth of gold, yet still the hallowed soil is here. The swarming street is but a picture painted over. Beneath the ever-shifting characters of speculation and of eager trade, incessantly traced upon this pavement of the modern city, lies the undimmed and indelible patriotic record of old New York.

The spot upon which we stand was the site of the second City Hall, which, for more than a hundred years, was the central seat of the active political life of the State and the city. Faneuil Hall, in Boston, is justly called the cradle of the Revolution, for it rocked the infant cry against ministerial injustice into the overwhelming chorus of freedom and independence. Carpenter's Hall, in Philadelphia, sheltered the Continental Congress. In Philadelphia, also, in the State House, the great debate upon independence proceeded, and there the great Declaration was signed. The titles of such monuments to renown and endless national gratitude no envy assails, no rivalry disputes. But the city of Hamilton, of Jay, of Livingston, of John Lamb, and Isaac Sears, and Gouverneur Morris, as it moved with



equal step by its sister cities in the field, cherishes the historic sites of its own patriotic activity with the same reverence that it salutes those of its peers.

Here, in 1735, the trial of John Zenger established the freedom of the American press, and declared the cardinal principle of its liberty, that the publication of the truth is not a libel. From the Assembly of New York, sitting in this place in 1764, proceeded the protest against the Stamp Act, and here the Committees of Correspondence were appointed which combined and organized colonial action. In this ancient hall assembled the Stamp-Act Congress, the first Congress of the United Colonies, whose clear and uncompromising voice announced the American purpose and foretold American independence. It was a New York merchant, President of the Chamber of Commerce, who wrote the address of the Congress to the House of Commons. They were New York merchants who, as the Congress adjourned, attested their high design by forming a league and covenant of non-importation. It was to a New York merchant, as mayor of the city, that the British governor of the province and the commander of the royal forces surrendered the hated stamps, and to this spot they were brought in solemn procession, amid the shouts of rejoicing citizens.

From the balcony of the hall that stood here the Declaration of Independence was first read to the citizens of New York, and, although the enemy's fleet had entered the harbor, the people, as they listened, tore down the royal arms from the walls of the hall and burned them in the street, as their fiery patriotism

was about to consume the royal power in the province. Here sat the Continental Congress in its closing days, here John Adams was commissioned as the first American Minister to Great Britain, and here the Congress received Sir John Temple, the first British Consul-General to the United States. Here Jefferson was selected by Congress as Minister to France, and here Secretary Jay, with the same equable mind and clear comprehension and unbending integrity that afterwards illustrated the first exercise of the judicial power of the Union, directed the foreign affairs of the Confederation. Here, also, when the Confederation disappeared, the first Congress of the Union assembled. Indeed, we are enveloped by inspiring memories and kindling local associations. Yonder, almost within sound of my voice, still stands the ancient and famous inn where the commander-in-chief tenderly parted with his officers; and there, over the way, where once a modest mansion stood, the *Federalist* was chiefly written. The very air about this hallowed spot is the air of American patriotism. To breathe it, charged with such memories, is to be inspired with the loftiest human purpose, to be strengthened for the noblest endeavor. By the most impressive associations, by the most dignified and important historic events, was this place dedicated to the illustrious transaction which we commemorate to-day.

But the majesty of the event was not its circumstance; it was its import. A people whose courage and endurance in the field, and whose capacity of local self-government, had been amply tested, was here to take its place as a united republic beside the ancient



and powerful monarchies of Christendom. It was to do this amid the scornful distrust of the world, and while involved in domestic jealousies and vast and obscure internal perils. The hope of success lay apparently in one man, revered and beloved as no other man had ever been, and upon the successful issue of the trust to which he was here solemnly devoted. What scene in human history transcends the grandeur and the significance of that consecration? Gazing upon this sculptured form, and remembering that this was the very hour and this the place of the sublime event; that here, under the benignant arch of heaven, Washington appeared to take the oath of his great office—the air is hushed, even the joyous tumult of this glad day is stilled, the familiar scene fades from before our eyes, and our awed hearts whisper within us, “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

The streets, the windows, the roofs, were thronged with people, and, drowning my feeble voice, surely you can hear the vast and prolonged shout that saluted the hero. Touched to the heart by the affectionate greeting, he advanced to the railing and, placing his hand upon his breast, he bowed low, and then for a moment, overwhelmed by emotion, he stepped back and seated himself amid a sudden and solemn silence. Then he arose and, coming forward, his majestic and commanding frame stood upon the identical stone upon which I stand at this moment, and which, fixed fast here beneath the statue, will remain, in the eyes of all men, an imperishable memorial of the scene. Near Washington



were John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Roger Sherman, Chancellor Livingston, General Knox, General Sinclair, Baron Steuben, and other famous men. The chancellor, in his robes, solemnly recited the words of the oath. The Secretary of the Senate raised the Bible. Washington bent low, and audibly saying, "I swear, so help me God!" reverently kissed the book. "It is done," cried the chancellor. "Long live George Washington, President of the United States!" "Long live George Washington!" shouted the people in one resounding cry of exultation. "Long live George Washington!" rang all the bells and roared all the cannon of a continent. "Long live George Washington!" echoed every heart and voice in the world that pleaded and beat for liberty. And now, after a hundred years have passed, more reverently, more universally, more gratefully than ever, in all civilized lands in which the greatness of his example has exalted the estimate of human character and the standard of human conduct, every people fervently prolongs the prayer, "Long live George Washington!"

The task upon which he entered here was infinitely greater than that which he undertook when, fourteen years before, he drew his sword under the elm at Cambridge as Commander-in-chief of the Continental army. To lead a people in revolution wisely and successfully, without ambition and without a crime, demands, indeed, lofty genius and unbending virtue. But to build their State amid the angry conflict of passion and prejudice and unreasonable apprehension, the incredulity of many, and the grave doubt of all; to organize for them,

and peacefully to inaugurate, a complete and satisfactory government—this is the greatest service that a man can render to mankind. But this, also, is the glory of Washington. The power of his personal character, his penetrating foresight, and the wisdom of his judgment, in composing the myriad elements that threatened to overwhelm the mighty undertaking, are all unparalleled. "Nothing but harmony, honesty, industry, and frugality," he said to Lafayette, "are necessary to make us a great and happy people." But he was not a man of phrases, nor did he suppose that government could be established or maintained by lofty professions of virtue. No man's perception of the indispensability of great principles to the successful conduct of great affairs was ever more unclouded than his; but no man had ever learned, by a more prolonged or arduous experience, that infinite patience, sagacity, forbearance, and wise concession must attend inflexible principle, if great affairs are to be greatly administered. His countrymen are charged with fond idolatry of his memory, and his greatness is pleasantly depreciated as a mythologic exaggeration. But no church ever canonized a saint more worthily than he is canonized by the national affection, and to no ancient hero, benefactor, or lawgiver, were divine honors ever so justly decreed as to Washington the homage of the world.

With the sure sagacity of a leader of men, he selected at once, for the highest and most responsible stations, the three chief Americans who represented the three forces in the nation which alone could command success in the institution of the government. Hamil-



ton was the head, Jefferson was the heart, and John Jay was the conscience. Washington's just and serene ascendancy was the lambent flame in which these beneficent powers were fused; and nothing less than that ascendancy could have ridden the whirlwind and directed the storm that burst around him. Party spirit blazed into fury. John Jay was hung in effigy; Hamilton was stoned; insurrection raised its head in the West; Washington himself was denounced; and suddenly the French Revolution, the ghastly spectre rising from delirium and despair, the avenging fury of intolerable oppression, at once hopeful and heart-rending, seized modern civilization, shook Europe to the centre, divided the sympathy of America, and, as the child of liberty, appealed to Washington. But the great soul, amid battle and defeat and long retreat and the sinking heart of a people undismayed, was not appalled by the convulsion of the world. Amid the uproar of Christendom he knew liberty too well to be deluded by its mad pretence. Without a beacon, without a chart, but with unwavering eye and steady hand, he guided his country safe through darkness and through storm. In the angry shock of domestic parties, "there is but one character which keeps them in awe," wrote Edmund Randolph. "The foundations of the moral world," said a wise teacher in Cambridge University, bidding young Englishmen mark the matchless man—"the foundations of the moral world were shaken, but not the understanding of Washington." He held his steadfast way, like the sun across the firmament, giving life and health and strength to the new nation; and, upon a searching survey of his



administration, which established the fundamental principles of American policy in every department of the government, there is no great act which his country would annul; no word spoken, no line written, no deed done by him, which justice would reverse or wisdom deplore.

Fellow-citizens, the solemn dedication of Washington to this august and triumphant task is the event which this statue will commemorate to unborn generations. Elsewhere, in bronze and marble, and upon glowing canvas, genius has delighted to invest with the immortality of art the best-beloved and most familiar of American figures. The surveyor of the Virginia wilderness, the leader of the Revolution, the President, the man, are known of all men; they are everywhere beheld and revered. But here, at last, upon the scene of the crowning event of his life, and of his country's life; here, in the throbbing heart of the great city, where it will be daily seen by countless thousands; here in the presence of the President of the United States, of the Governor of New York, of the official authorities of other States, of the organized body of New York merchants who, as in other years they have led the city in so many patriotic deeds upon this spot, lead now in this commemoration of the greatest; and, finally, of this vast and approving concourse of American citizens, we raise this calm and admonishing form. Its majestic repose shall charm and subdue the multitudinous life that heaves and murmurs around it, and, as the moon draws the swaying tides of ocean, its lofty serenity shall lift the hurrying throng to unselfish thoughts, to generous

patriotism, to a nobler life. Here descended upon our fathers the benediction of the personal presence of Washington. Here may the moral grandeur of his character and his life inspire our children's children forever!





VIII

THE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL ARCH

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE LAYING OF THE CORNER-  
STONE OF THE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL ARCH IN  
NEW YORK, MAY 30, 1890



## THE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL ARCH

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THIS is a day of proud and tender memories. With malice towards none, with charity for all, it commemorates the triumph of American patriotism and the assured integrity of the American Union. Its associations blend naturally with those of the Revolution and of the inauguration of the national government. The garlanded graves of the Boys in Blue recall the memory of the old Continentals. When a soldier of New England, in the war for the Union, was marching through New York to the front, and was asked from what place he came, still keeping step to the drum-beat, he answered, "From Bunker Hill, from Bunker Hill." When Theodore Winthrop fell, we said, Joseph Warren dies again for his country. The march of Sherman to the sea echoes the tread of Ethan Allen marching to Ticonderoga and demanding its surrender, as Sherman would have demanded it, in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress. To hear Paul Jones on his shattered ship answering the British captain's summons to yield, by shouting that he had not yet begun to fight, is to see our Farragut, in the fiery storm of battle, lashed to the rigging of the *Hartford*,



"The sea-king of the sovereign West,  
Who made his mast a throne."

We cannot speak of Grant at Appomattox but we remember the crowning mercy at Yorktown. We cannot mention Abraham Lincoln but we think of George Washington.

What day in the year could be more fitting than the day consecrated by such memories on which to lay the corner-stone of a monument which shall recall alike the beginning of the Union and the glory of its greatest citizen? Never before could this duty have been performed with greater joy and gratitude, because now the national Union, the great result of the Revolution and of the devotion of Washington, has been tried by fire, and its dross is burned away. Whether the flowers fall to-day upon the graves of the Blue or the Gray, they fall on the dust of Americans. As nothing but American valor could have hoped successfully to assail the Union, so nothing but American valor could have successfully maintained it. Thank God! whatever colors we may have worn in the past, to-day the sun shines upon a nation which is all true blue.

In beginning this memorial work, if New York is justly proud, she does not forget that all the American cities of the Revolution have their distinctive patriotic renown. In Boston was rocked the cradle of Liberty. In Philadelphia Independence was declared and the Constitution adopted. In Baltimore sat the Continental Congress when it was driven from Philadelphia, and in Charleston harbor the great fleet of Sir Peter Parker was dispersed and destroyed. But New York was the

scene of the last act of the Revolution, and of the opening drama of constitutional union. In New York the flag of England was lowered. From these shores the proud sovereignty of Great Britain sailed away. Here the first Congress of the United States assembled. Here the first President was inaugurated, and here the national government of the Union began. From the day, two hundred and eighty-one years ago, when Hendrick Hudson first saw the island on which the city stands, to the present hour, these closely related events are by far the greatest and most momentous in the annals of New York. Until now the part taken in them by the city has wanted a monument. Henceforth the monument that we raise will tell the glorious story.

In older lands monumental arches and columns of victory celebrate territorial conquest, personal ambition, and the armed march of empire. But in this younger land of liberty and law, where the army is but a policeman and the navy a watchman of the coast, we build an arch of Peace, the symbol of the Republic, in which the guaranteed right of every citizen is the security of the commonwealth, and whose first chief magistrate is the perpetual illustration and inspiration of American citizenship. It is him especially, the dominating figure of his time, the individual personal force that has so largely moulded our history; him who refused the crown, and made the Constitution live and move; who found his country a cluster of dependent colonies, and left it an independent nation, that this monument especially commemorates.

That, in the perilous tumult of the time, the jealous



clash of doubtful communities, and the hot conflict of selfish interests and passions, the Constitution should have been harmoniously drawn and peacefully ratified, was in itself a miracle. Against probability, despite apprehension, beyond hope, so much was achieved. But still the great question remained. There was the potential nation—the aspirations of liberty, the hopes of humanity hidden within it. There lay the statue completely wrought. Should it lie there like those huge Egyptian columns that were quarried, but never raised? Who should touch it with the vital spark? Where was the personal power, so sovereign, so calm, so pure, so acknowledged, that, like the blessed might which stilled the raging waters of the sea, it should pacify the weltering passions of a continent, and, raising the motionless form of the nation, send it, alive, indomitable, resistless, upon its radiant and beneficent way?

We always gladly concede that Washington was good, but we are not always so sure that he was great. But a man's greatness is measured by his service to mankind. If, without ambition and without a crime, righteously to lead a people to independence through a righteous war; then, without precedent and amid vast and incalculable hostile forces, to organize their government, and establish in every department the fundamental principles of the policy which has resulted in marvellous national power and prosperity, and untold service to liberty throughout the world; and to do all this without suspicion or reproach, with perfect dignity and sublime repose,—if this be greatness, do you



find it more in Alexander or Pericles, Cæsar or Alfred, in Charlemagne or Napoleon Bonaparte, or in George Washington? As this majestic arch will stand here, through the long succession of years, in the all-revealing light of day, visible at every point and at every point exquisitely rounded and complete, so in the searching light of history stands Washington, strong, simple, symmetrical, supreme, beloved by a filial nation, revered by a grateful world.

To the memory of such a character and of such events we dedicate this monument. But, fellow-citizens, to what does this monument dedicate us? Arching this thronged highway of the city, bending in silent benediction over the ceaseless flood of multitudinous life which pours beneath, what will it say to the endless procession of Washington's fellow-countrymen? What is the voice which, by erecting this monument, we make our own? In his eulogy upon Washington, Gouverneur Morris said that, as the constitutional convention was about to organize, when success seemed hopeless and despair suggested fatal compromise, Washington said: "If to please the people we offer what we ourselves disapprove, how can we afterwards defend our work? Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair; the event is in the hands of God." There spoke the good genius of America. If any words were to be inscribed upon this arch, these words of Washington would be apples of gold in pictures of silver. What he said to the convention he says to us. It is the voice of the heroic spirit which, in council and in the field, has made, and alone will preserve, our

America. It is the voice that will speak from this Memorial Arch to all coming generations of Americans. Whatever may betide; whatever war, foreign or domestic, may threaten; whatever specious sophistry may assail the political conscience of the country, or bribery of place or money corrupt its political action; above the roar of the mob and the insidious clamor of the demagogue, the voice of Washington will still be the voice of American patriotism and of manly honor—  
“Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair; the event is in the hands of God!”

IX

CHARLES SUMNER

A EULOGY, DELIVERED BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSA-  
CHUSETTS, IN THE BOSTON MUSIC HALL, JUNE 9, 1874





## CHARLES SUMNER

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THE prayer is said—the dirge is sung; from the waters of the bay to the hills of Berkshire the funeral bells of the commonwealth have tolled; the Congress of the United States, of which he was the oldest member in continuous service, has in both Houses spoken his praises—no voice more eloquent than that of his opponents; the race to whose elevation his life was consecrated has bewailed him with filial gratitude; this city, his birth-place and his home, has proudly mourned its illustrious citizen; the pulpit and the press everywhere in the land have blended sorrow and admiration; and now his native State, with all its honored magistracy—the State which gave him his great opportunity, clothing his words with the majesty of Massachusetts, so that when he spoke it was not the voice of a man, but of a commonwealth, lamenting a son so beloved, a servant so faithful, a friend so true—comes last of all to say farewell, and to deliver the character and career of Charles Sumner to history and the judgment of mankind. I know how amply, how eloquently, how tenderly, the story of his life has been told. In this place you heard it in words that spoke

for the culture and the conscience of the country—for the prosperous and happy.\* And yonder in Faneuil Hall his eulogy fell from lips that must always glow when they mention him—lips that spoke for the most wronged and most unfortunate in the land, who never saw the face of Sumner, but whose children's children will bless his name forever.† I might well hesitate to stand here if I did not know that, enriched by your sympathy, my words, telling the same tale, will seem to your generous hearts to prolong for a moment the requiem that you would not willingly let die.

Nor think the threefold strain superfluous. How well this universal eulogy—these mingling voices of various nativity, but all American—befits a man whose aims and efforts were universal; whom neither a city, nor a State, nor a party, nor a nation, nor a race bound with any local limitation. On a lofty hill overlooking the lake of Cayuga, in New York, stands a noble tree, in the grounds of the Cornell University, under which an Oxford scholar,‡ choosing America for his home because America is the home of Liberty, has placed a

\* On April 29, memorial services in honor of Mr. Sumner had been held, at which the Hon. Carl Schurz had given the principal address.

† A Sumner Memorial Meeting had been held at Faneuil Hall, on April 14, at which a eulogy on Mr. Sumner had been delivered by the Hon. Robert B. Elliott of South Carolina. The fact that this meeting took place on the anniversary of the assassination of Mr. Lincoln made it of especial significance to the colored citizens of Boston, under whose auspices it was held.

‡ Mr. Goldwin Smith.



seat upon which he has carved, "Above all nations is Humanity." That is the legend which Charles Sumner carved upon his heart, and sought to write upon the hearts of his fellow-citizens and of the world. And if at this moment my voice should suddenly sink into silence, I can believe that this hall would thrill and murmur with the last words he ever publicly spoke in Massachusetts, standing on this very spot: "Nor would I have my country forget at any time, in the discharge of its transcendent duties, that, since the rule of conduct and of honor is the same for nations as for individuals, the greatest nation is that which does most for humanity."

Amid the general sorrow Massachusetts mourns him by the highest right, for with all the grasp of his hope and his cosmopolitan genius, perhaps for those very reasons, he was essentially a Massachusetts man. And here I touch the first great influence that moulded your Senator. This is the Puritan State, and the greatness of Sumner was the greatness of the Puritan genius—the greatness of moral power. Learning and culture and accomplishment; æsthetic taste and knowledge; the grace of society; the scholar's rich resource in travel; illustrious friendships in every land; the urbanity and charm of a citizen of the world—all these he had; all these you know; yet all these were but the velvet in which the iron Puritan hand was clad—the Puritan hand which in other days had smitten kings and dynasties hip and thigh; had saved civil and religious liberty in England; had swept the Mediterranean of pirates; had avenged the Lord's

“slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;”

the Puritan hand which, reaching out across the sea, sterner than the icy sternness of the New England shore, grasped a new continent, and wrought the amazing miracle of America.

The Puritan spirit, in the larger sense, enriched with many nationalities, broader, more generous, more humane, is the master influence of American civilization, and among all our public men it has no type so satisfactory and complete as Charles Sumner. He was the son of Massachusetts. By the fruit let the tree be judged. The State to whose hard coast the *Mayflower* came, and upon whose rocks it dropped its seed — the State in which the mingled Puritan and Pilgrim spirit has been most active — is to-day the chief of commonwealths. It is the community in which the average of well-being is higher than in any State we know in history. Puritan in origin though it be, it is more truly liberal and free than any similar community in the world. The fig and the pomegranate and the almond will not grow there, nor the nightingale sing, but nobler blossoms of the old human stock than its most famous children the sun never shone upon; nor has the liberty loving heart of man heard sweeter music than the voices of James Otis and Samuel Adams, of John Adams and Joseph Warren, of Josiah Quincy and Charles Sumner. Surely I may say so, born in the State that Roger Williams founded — Roger Williams, the prophet whom Massachusetts stoned.

Into this State and these influences Charles Sumner



was born sixty-three years ago, while as yet the traditions of colonial New England were virtually unchanged. Here were the town-meeting, the constable, the common school, the training-day, the general intelligence, the morality, the habit of self-government, the homogeneity of population, the ample territory, the universal instinct of law. Here was the full daily practice of what De Tocqueville afterwards called the two or three principal ideas which form the basis of the social theory of the United States, and which seemed to make a republic possible, practicable, and wise. It was one of the good fortunes of Sumner's life that, born amid these influences, he used to the utmost the advantage of school and college. To many men youth is so sweet a siren that in hearing her song they forget all but the pleasure of listening to it. But the sibyl saved no scroll from Sumner; he had the wisdom to seize them all. His classmates, gayly returning late at night, saw the studious light shining in his window. The boy was hard at work, already in those plastic years storing his mind and memory, which seemed indeed an "inability to forget," with the literature and historic lore which gave his later discourse such amplitude and splendor of illustration that, like a royal robe, it was stiff and cumbrous and awkward with exaggerated richness of embroidery. He never lost this vast capacity of work, and his life had no idle hours. Long afterwards, when he was in Paris, recovering from the blow which struck him down in the Senate chamber, ordered not to think or read, and daily, as his physician lately tells us, undergoing a torture of treatment which



he refused to mitigate by anæsthetics, simply unable to do anything, he devoted himself to the study and collection of engravings, in which he became an expert. And I remember in the midsummer of 1871, when he remained, as was his custom, in Washington, after the city was deserted by all but its local population, and when I saw him daily, that he rose at seven in the morning, and, with but a slight breakfast at nine, sat at his desk in the library hard at work until five in the afternoon. It was his vacation; the weather was tropical; and he was sixty years old. The renowned Senator at his post was still the solitary midnight student of the college.

But other influences mingled in his education, and helped to mould the man. While his heart burned with the tale of Plutarch's heroes, with the story of ancient States, and the politics of Greece and Rome and modern Europe, he lived in this historic city, and was therefore familiar with many of the most inspiring scenes of our American story. I know not if the people of this neighborhood are always conscious of the hallowed ground upon which they daily tread. We who come hither from other States, pilgrims to the cradle of American independence, are moved by emotions such as we cannot elsewhere feel. Here is the "Old South" meeting-house—and here may it long remain!—where, however changed, still in imagination Sam Adams calls the Sons of Liberty to their duty. There is the old State-house where James Otis, with electric eloquence, brings a continent to its feet. Beneath is the ground where Crispus Attucks fell. Beyond is Faneuil Hall, the plain-

est and most reverend political temple now standing in the world, while upon the principles which are its inseparable traditions has been founded the most humane republic in history. There is the Old North steeple, on which Paul Revere's lantern lights the land to independence. Below is the water on which the scarlet troops of Percy and of Howe glitter in the June sunshine of ninety-nine years ago; and lo! memorial of a battle lost and a cause won, the tall, gray, melancholy shaft on Bunker Hill rises—rises “till it meets the sun in his coming, while the earliest light of morning gilds it, and parting day lingers and plays on its summit.”

These scenes, as well as his books and college, were the school of Sumner; and as the tall and awkward youth, dreaming of Marathon and Arbela, of Sempach and Morgarten, walked on Bunker Hill, and his eyes wandered over peaceful fields and happy towns to Concord and Lexington, doubt not that the genius of his native land whispered to him that all knowledge and the highest training and the purest purpose were but the necessary equipment of the ambition that would serve in any way a country whose cause in his own day, as in the day of Bunker Hill, was the cause of human nature. Charles Sumner was an educated man, a college-bred man, as all the great Revolutionary leaders of Massachusetts were; and he knew, as every intelligent man knows, that from the day when Themistocles led the educated Athenians at Salamis to that when Von Moltke marshalled the educated Germans against France, the sure foundations of States are laid in knowledge, not in ignorance, and that every sneer at educa-



tion, at cultivation, at book-learning, which is the recorded wisdom of the experience of mankind, is the demagogue's sneer at intelligent liberty, inviting national degeneration and ruin.

Sumner was soon at the law school the favorite pupil of that accomplished magistrate Judge Story, the right hand of Marshall, to whom in difficult moments the great Webster turned for law. But the character of his legal studies when, a little later, he was lecturing at the law school—for he spoke chiefly of constitutional law and the law of nations—showed even then the bent of his feeling, the vague reaching out towards the future, the first faint hints and foreshowings of his own ultimate career. Could it have been revealed to him, in that modest lecture-room at Cambridge, as he was unfolding to a few students the principles of international law—which in its full glory he believed to be nothing less than the science of the moral relations of States to each other—that one day, in the Senate of the United States, and in its chief and most honorable place, he should plead for the practical application of the principles which he cherished, a recognized authority, and himself one of the law-givers whom he had described as the reformers of nations and the builders of human society, how well might he have seen that culmination of his career as the most secret hope of his heart fulfilled! But again, as he stood there, could he have seen, as in a vision, that one day also he should stand in that senatorial arena in deadly conflict with crime against humanity—a conflict that shook the continent and arrested the attention of the world—and as a general upon the



battle-field marshals all his forces, holding his swift and glittering lines in hand — his squadrons and regiments and artillery, his skirmishers and reserves, massing and dispersing at his supreme will, and at last, snatching all his force, hurls it at the foe in one blasting bolt of fire and victory — so he, in that other and greater field, should gather up all the accumulated resources of his learning, all the training of the law, all the deep instincts and convictions of his conscience, and hurl them in one blazing and resistless mass in the very forefront of that mighty debate that flamed into civil war, melting four millions of chains, and regenerating a nation — could all this have been revealed to him, I doubt if he could have prepared himself for the great part that he was to play with more conscience or more care.

Then, to the influences that made the man was added a residence in Europe. He returned a polished cosmopolitan; a learned youth who had sat upon the bench in Westminster Hall, and taught the judges the rulings of their own courts; who had mingled on equal terms in the bouts of lettered wit, no longer at the Mermaid, but at Holland House and the breakfast-rooms of accomplished scholars in London and Paris and Berlin and Rome. He returned knowing many of the men and women of highest renown in Europe, and he brought back what he carried away — a stainless purity of life and loftiness of aim; the habit of incessant work, which was the law of his being; and the tastes of a jurist, but not those of a practising lawyer. His look, his walk, his dress, his manner, were not those of the busy advocate, but of the cultivated and brilliant man of society — the

Admirable Crichton of the salons. He was oftener seen in the refined circles of the city, in the libraries and dining-rooms of Prescott and Quincy, of Bancroft and Ticknor, than in the courts of law. Distinguished foreigners, constantly arriving, brought him letters, and he took them to the galleries and the college. But while he sauntered, he studied. In his office he was diligently editing great works of law; not practising at the bar, for, indeed, he was not formed for a jury lawyer, where the jury was less than a nation or mankind. The electric agility, the consummate tact, the readiness for every resource, the humor that brightens or withers, the command of the opposite point of view, the superficial ardor, the facility of simulation that makes the worse appear the better reason, the passionate gust and sweep of eloquent appeal—these were lacking, and wanting these, he did not seek the laurels of the jury advocate. Sumner's legal mind at this time, and throughout his life, was largely moulded, trained to the contemplation of great principles and to lofty research. As one of his admiring comrades, himself a renowned lawyer, says of him, "In sporting terms, he had a good eye for country, but no scent for a trail." The movement of his mind was grand and comprehensive. He spoke naturally, not in subtle and dexterous pleas, but in stately and measured orations.

When he returned from Europe he was thought to have been too much fascinated by England, and throughout his life it was sometimes said that he was still enthralled by his admiration for that country. But what is more natural to an American than love of Eng-



land? Does not Hawthorne instinctively call it "Our old Home"? The Pilgrims came to plant a purer England, and their children, the colonists, took up arms to maintain a truer England, but an England still. They became independent, but they did not renounce their race nor their language, and their victory left them the advanced outpost of English political progress and civilization. The principles that we most proudly maintain to-day, those to which Sumner's whole life was devoted, are English traditions. The great muniments of individual liberty in every degree descended to us from our fathers. The commonwealth, justice as the political corner-stone, the rule of the constitutional majority, the habeas corpus, the trial by jury, freedom of speech and of the press—these are English, and they are ours. I do not agree with the melancholy Fisher Ames that "the immortal spirit of the wood-nymph Liberty dwells only in the English oak;" but the most patriotic American may well remember that individual freedom sometimes seems almost surer and sturdier in England than here, and may wisely repair to drink at those elder fountains. No Englishman in this generation has more influenced the thought of his country than John Stuart Mill, and the truest American will find upon his heroic pages gleams of a fairer and ampler America than ever in vision even Samuel Adams saw. No, no. Plymouth Rock was but a stepping-stone from one continent to another in the great march of the same historic development; and to-day, with electric touch, we grasp the hand of England under the sea, that the tumult of the ocean may not toss us farther asunder, but throb as the



beating of one common heart. Is it strange, then, that the young lawyer whose deepest instinct was love of freedom, and whose youth had been devoted to the study of that noble science whose highest purpose is to defend individual right, after long residence in the land of John Selden, of Coke, of Mansfield, of Blackstone, of Romilly, as well as of Shakespeare and Bacon, of Newton and Jeremy Taylor—a land which had appealed in every way to his heart, his mind, his imagination, whose history had inspired, whose learning had armed him to be a liberator of the oppressed—should always have turned with admiration to the country “where,” as her laureate sings,

“freedom broadens slowly down  
From precedent to precedent”?

Such were the general influences that moulded the young Sumner. But to what a situation in his own country he returned!—a situation neither understood nor suspected by the fastidious and elegant circles which received him. The man never lived who enjoyed more or was more fitted to enjoy the higher delights of human society than Sumner, or who might have seemed, to those who scanned his habits and his tastes, so little adapted for the heroic part. Could the scope and progress and culmination of the great contest which had already begun have been foreseen and measured, Charles Sumner would probably have been selected as the type of the cultivated and scholarly gentleman who would recoil from the conflict, as Sir Thomas Browne shunned the stern tumult of the Great Rebellion.

In speaking of that conflict I shall speak plainly; I hope to speak truly. To turn to Mr. Sumner's public career is to open a chapter of our history written in fire and closed in blood, but which we must be willing to recall if we would justly measure the man. Trained in his own expectation for other ends, framed for friendship, for gentleness, for professional and social ease, and the placid renown of letters, he was suddenly caught up into the stormy cloud, and his life became a strife that filled a generation. But during all that tremendous time, on the one hand enthusiastically trusted, on the other contemptuously scorned and hated, his heart was that of a little child. He said no unworthy word, he did no unmanly deed; dishonor fled his face; and to-day those who so long and so naturally, but so wrongfully, believed him their enemy, strew rosemary for remembrance upon his grave.

Down to the year 1830 the moral agitation against slavery in this country smouldered. But in that year Benjamin Lundy touched with fire the soul of William Lloyd Garrison, and that agitation burst out again irrepressibly. You remember—who can forget?—the passionate onset of the abolitionists. It was conscience rising in insurrection. They made their great appeal with the ardor of martyrs and the zeal of primitive Christians. Fifth-monarchy men, ranters, Anabaptists, were never more repugnant to their times than they, and they became the prey of the worst and most disorderly passions. The abolition missionaries were mobbed, imprisoned, maimed, murdered; but still, as, in the bitter days of Puritan persecution in Scot-



land, the undaunted voices of the Covenanters were heard singing hymns that echoed and re-echoed from peak to peak of the barren mountains until the great, dumb wilderness was vocal with praise, so the solemn appeal of the abolitionists to the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence echoed from solitary heart to heart until the land rang with the litany of liberty. In politics the discussion had been stamped out, like a threatening fire upon the prairie, whenever it arose. But soon after Mr. Sumner's return from Europe this, too, flamed out afresh in the attempted annexation of Texas. Early in 1845 the plan was consummated. Mr. Sumner was a Whig, but then and always he was, above all, a man. He was too well versed in the history of freedom not to know that the great victories over despotism and slavery in every form had been won by united action, and he knew that united action implies organization and a party. But, while great political results are to be gained by means of great parties, he knew that a party which is too blind to see, or too cowardly to acknowledge, the real issue; which pursues its ends, however noble, by ignoble means; which tolerates corruption, which trusts unworthy men, which suffers the public service to be prostituted to personal ends—that such a party defies reason and conscience, and summons all honest men to oppose it. When conscience goes, all goes; and wherever conscience went, Charles Sumner followed. It took him out of those delightful drawing-rooms and tranquil libraries; it drew him away from old companions and cherished friends; it exposed him to their suspicion, their hostility, their scorn; it forbade



him the peaceful future of his dreams and expectations; it placed him at the fiery heart of the fiercest conflict of the century; it hedged his life with insults and threats and plots of assassination; it bared his head to the dreadful blow that struck him senseless to the Senate floor, and sent him a tortured wanderer beyond the sea; later, it separated him from the co-operation of colleagues, and severed him from his party; and at last it exposed him, sick in body and in mind, to the blow that wounded his soul, the censure of his beloved Massachusetts. But he did not quail; he did not falter; he showed himself still to be her worthy son. Wherever conscience went, Charles Sumner followed. "God help me!" cried Martin Luther, "I can no other." "God help me!" said Charles Sumner, "I must do my duty."

The Whigs are, or ought to be, he said, in 1845, the party of freedom. But when they refused to recognize the real contest in the country by rejecting, in their National Convention of 1848, the Wilmot Proviso, Mr. Sumner went with the other Conscience Whigs to Worcester, and organized the Free-soil party; and when, in the winter of 1850-51, the Legislature of Massachusetts was to elect the successor of Daniel Webster in the Senate of the United States, the Free-soil chiefs, as upright, able, and patriotic a body of political leaders as ever Massachusetts had, deliberately selected Mr. Sumner as their candidate—a selection which showed the estimate of the man by those who knew him most intimately, and who most thoroughly understood the times. He was young, strong, learned, variously accomplished, a

miracle of industry, zealous, pure, of indomitable courage, and of supreme moral energy. But he had little political ambition, and in 1846 had peremptorily declined to be a candidate for Congress. He was not a member of either of the great parties. He would not make any pledge of any kind, or move his tongue, or wink his eye, to secure success. He was pledged, then and always and only, to his sense of right. He stood for no partisan end whatever, but simply and solely for uncompromising resistance to slavery. The contest of the election was long; it lasted for three months, and on April 24, 1851, he was elected. "I accept," he said, "as the servant of Massachusetts, mindful of the sentiments uttered by her successive legislatures, of the genius which inspires her history, and of the men, her perpetual pride and ornament, who breathed into her that breath of liberty which early made her an example to her sister States." How these lofty words lift us out of the grossness of public corruption and incapacity into the air of ideal states and ideal public men! What a stately summons are they to his beloved Massachusetts once more to take the lead, and again to guide her sister States to greater political purity and the ancient standards of public character and service!

The hour in which Mr. Sumner wrote those words, the hour of his entrance upon public life, was the darkest of our history. But if his mind had turned regretfully to that tranquil career of his earlier anticipation, how well might his good genius have whispered to him what the flower of English gentlemen and scholars had written three hundred years before, "To what purpose



should our thoughts be directed to various kinds of knowledge unless room be afforded for putting it into practice, so that public advantage may be the result?"\* Or that other strain, full of the music of a consecrated soul, in which Philip Sidney writes to his father-in-law, Walsingham, "I think a wise and constant man ought never to grieve while he doth play, as a man may say, his own part truly."

What, then, was the political situation when Mr. Sumner entered the Senate? Slavery had apparently subdued the country. Great juries in the Northern States presented citizens who, in time of peace, wished to discuss vital public questions, as guilty of sedition. The legislatures were summoned to make their speeches indictable offences. In the Legislature of Rhode Island such a bill was reported. The Governor of New York favored such a law. The Governor of Ohio delivered a citizen of that State to the authorities of another, to be tried for helping a slave to escape. The Governor of Massachusetts said that all discussion of the subject which tended to incite insurrection had been held to be indictable. Every great national office was then, and long had been, held by the ministers of slavery. The American ambassadors in Europe were everywhere silent, or smoothly apologized. Every committee in Congress was the servant of slavery, and when the Vice-President left his seat in the Senate it was filled by another like himself. All the attendants who stood around him, the door-keepers, messengers, sergeants-at-

\* From a letter of Sidney to Hubert Languet, March 1, 1578.



arms, down to the very pages who noiselessly skimmed the floor, were selected by its agents. Beyond the superb walls of the Capitol, which Senator Benton had long solemnly warned the country was built by permission of that Supreme Power which would seize and occupy it when the time came, the whole vast system of national offices was within the patronage of slavery. Every little post-office, every custom-house clerkship, was a bribe to silence, while the Postmaster-general of the United States robbed the mails at its bidding. When Sumner entered the Senate the most absolute subserviency to slavery was decreed as the test of nationality, and that power did not hesitate to declare that any serious effort, however lawfully made, to change its policy would strike the tocsin of civil war. Meanwhile, at the very moment of his election, the horrors of the Fugitive-slave Law had burst upon thousands of innocent homes. Mothers snatched their children and fled, they knew not whither. Brave men, long safe in recovered liberty, were seized for no crime but misfortune, and hurried to their doom. Young men and girls who had been always free, always residents of their own States, were kidnapped and sold. The anguish, the sublime heroism, of this ghastly persecution fills one of the most tragical and most inspiring epochs of our story. Even those who publicly sustained the law from a sense of duty secretly helped the flying fugitives upon their way. The human heart is stronger than sophistry. The man who impatiently exclaimed that of course the law was hard, but it was the law, and must be obeyed, suddenly felt the quivering, panting fugitive clinging to

his knees, guilty of no crime, and begging only the succor which no honest heart would refuse a dog cowering upon his threshold; and, as he heard the dread power thundering at the door, "I am the law, give me my prey!" in the same moment he heard God knocking at his heart, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my little ones, ye have done it unto me!"

Those days are passed. That fearful conflict is over; and the flowers just strewn all through these sorrowing States, indiscriminately upon the graves of the Blue and the Gray, show how truly it is ended. Heaven knows I speak of it with no willingness, with no bitterness; but how can I show you Charles Sumner if I do not show you the time that made him what he was? This was the political and moral situation of the country when he took the oath as Senator, on December 1, 1851. The famous political triumvirate of the former generation was gone. Mr. Calhoun, the master-will of the three, had died in the previous year. Mr. Webster was Secretary of State; and Henry Clay, with fading eye and bowed frame and trembling voice—Henry Clay, Compromise incarnate—feebly tottered out of the chamber as Charles Sumner, Conscience incarnate, came in. As he took the oath the new triumvirate was complete, for Mr. Seward and Mr. Chase had taken their seats two years before. For some months Mr. Sumner did not speak upon the great topic, and many of his friends at home thought him keeping silence too long, half fearing that he, too, had been enchanted by the woful Circe of the South. They did not know how carefully slavery prevented him from finding an opportunity. A month



before he could get the floor for his purpose, Theodore Parker said, in a public speech, "I wish he had spoken long ago. . . . But it is for him to decide, not for us. 'A fool's bolt is soon shot,' while a wise man often reserves his fire." At length, on August 26, 1852, after many efforts to be heard, Mr. Sumner obtained the floor, saying, as he arose, "The subject is at last broadly before the Senate, and, by the blessing of God, it shall be discussed."

This first great speech upon the repeal of the Fugitive-slave Law was the most significant event in the Senate since Mr. Webster's reply to Hayne, and an epitome of Mr. Sumner's whole public career. It was one of the words that are events, and from which historical epochs take their departure. These are strong words. See if they are justified. The slavery debate was certainly the most momentous that had ever occurred in the country, and brave words had been already uttered for freedom. The subtle and sanguine and sagacious Seward had spoken often and wisely. The passionless Chase, with massive and Websterian logic, had pressed his solid reasoning home; and the gay humor of Hale had irradiated his earnest and strenuous appeals. But all of these men were known to their colleagues as members of parties, as politicians, as men of political ambition. With such elements and men slavery was accustomed to deal. Carefully studying the Senator from New York, it saw the intellectual optimist who, with entire purity of character, trained ability, acute political instinct, and partisan habit, grasped the situation with his brain rather than



with his heart and conscience. It tested him by its own terrible earnestness. It weighed him in the balance of its own unquailing and uncompromising resolution, and found him wanting. Do not misunderstand me. Mr. Seward was the only political leader for whom I have ever felt the admiring loyalty which older men felt for Webster and Calhoun and Clay. His career has been nobly set forth by your own distinguished citizen, Mr. Adams, in his discourse before the Legislature of New York. And as he went to Albany to say what he believed to be the truth, so have I come hither. Slavery knew Mr. Seward to be accustomed to political considerations, to party necessities, to the claims of compromise. It knew the scope of his political philosophy, the brightness of his hope of American glory under the Union, the steady certainty of his trust that all would be well. Even if, like Webster and Calhoun and Clay, he saw the gathering storm, he thought—and he did not conceal his thought—that he had the confidence of his opponents, and could avert or control the tempest. Slavery knew that he could not. If he proudly declared the higher law, slavery knew that he did it, as Plato announced the Golden Rule, as a thinker, not as an actor; as a philosopher, not as the founder of a religion ready to be sealed with fire and blood. But this was the very spirit of slavery, and it did not see it to be his.

In the midst of a speech which logically cut the ground from beneath the slave interest, and calmly foretold the blessing of the emancipation that was unavoidable, Mr. Seward would sometimes turn and hold

out his fingers for a pinch of snuff towards some Southern senator who, turning away his face, offered him the box. When the Senate adjourned, Mr. Seward would perhaps join the same colleague, to stroll home along the avenue, as if they had been country lawyers coming from a court where they had been arguing a dry point of law. It showed how imperfectly he felt, or how inadequately he measured, the sullen intensity and relentless purpose of the spirit which dominated our politics, and would pause at nothing in its course. In a word, that spirit was essentially revolutionary, and Mr. Seward had not a revolutionary fibre in his being. Long afterwards, when the movement of secession had begun, as he walked with a fellow-senator to the Capitol on the morning of Washington's Birthday, he saw on all sides the national flags fluttering in the sun, and exclaimed to his companion, with triumphant incredulity, "Look there! see those flags! and yet they talk of disunion!"

Up to the moment of Mr. Sumner's appearance in the Senate Mr. Seward had been the foremost antislavery leader in public life. But Slavery, carefully studying him, believed, as I think, that he would compromise. That was the test. If he would compromise, he might annoy, but he was not to be feared. If he would compromise, he might melodiously sing the glory of the Union at his pleasure. If he would compromise, he would yield. If he were not as invincibly resolute as slavery, he was already conquered; and he was the leader of the North. There sat Seward in the Senate—yes, and there Webster had sat, there Clay had sat, with all their great and memorable service; there in its



presiding chair Millard Fillmore had sat ; and over them all Slavery had stalked straight on in its remorseless, imperial career. And if, as Mr. Seward's most able eulogist mournfully remarks, he was permitted at last to leave public life "with fewer marks of recognition of his brilliant career than he would have had if he had been the most insignificant of our Presidents," may it not be that, without questioning his generous character, his lofty ability, and his illustrious service, there was a general feeling that, in the last administration under which he served, he had seemed in some degree to justify the instinct of slavery, that his will was not as sternly inexorable as its own ?

I do not, of course, forget that compromise makes government possible, and that the Union was based upon it. "All government," says Burke, "is founded upon compromise and barter. . . . But," he adds, "in all fair dealing the thing bought must bear some proportion to the purchase paid. None will barter away the immediate jewel of the soul." So Sir James Mackintosh said of Lord Somers, whom he described as the perfect model of a wise statesman in a free community, that "to be useful he submitted to compromise with the evil that he could not extirpate." But it is the instinct of the highest statesmanship to know when the jewel of which Burke speaks is demanded, and to resolve that at any cost it shall not be sold. John Pym had it when he carried up to the lords the impeachment of Strafford. John Adams had it when he lifted the Continental Congress in his arms and hurled it over the irrevocable line of independence. Charles Sumner had it when,



at the close of his first great speech in the Senate, he exclaimed, in the face of Slavery in its highest seat, "By the Constitution which I have sworn to support, I am bound to disobey this act." Until that moment slavery had not seen in public life the man whom it truly feared. But now, amazed, incredulous, appalled, it felt that it had met its master. Here was a spirit as resolute and haughty as its own, with resources infinitely richer. Here at last was the North, the American conscience, the American will—the heir of the traditions of English Magna Charta, and, far beyond them, of the old Swiss cantons high on the heaven-kissing Alps—the spirit that would not wince, nor compromise, nor bend, but which, like a cliff of adamant, said to the furious sea, "Here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

Ten years afterwards, when States were seceding and preparing to secede—when the reluctant mind of the North began to see that war was possible—when even many of Mr. Sumner's and Mr. Seward's party friends trembled in dismay, Mr. Seward ended his last speech in the Senate,\* a guarded plea for the Union, by concessions which amazed many of his most earnest friends. I know that he thought it the part of a wise statesmanship that he who was to be the head of the new administration should retain, if possible, the support of the opposition of the North, by shunning everything like menace, and by speaking in the most temperate and conciliatory tone. But his mournful concluding words, "I learned early from Jefferson that in political affairs we cannot always do what seems to us absolutely best,"

\* On January 12, 1861.

sounded at that time and under those circumstances like a mortal cry of defeat and surrender. And, at the very time that Mr. Seward was speaking those words, Mr. Sumner was one evening surprised by a visit, in Washington, from a large number of the most conspicuous citizens of Boston, all of whom had been among his strongest and most positive political opponents. He welcomed them gravely, seeing that their purpose was very serious, and after a few moments the most distinguished member of the party\* made an impassioned appeal to the Senator. "You know us all," he said, "as fellow-citizens of yours who have always and most strongly regretted and opposed your political course. But at this awful moment, when the country hangs upon the edge of civil war—and what civil war means you know—we believe that there is one man only who can avert the threatening calamity, one man whom the North really trusts, and by whose counsels it will be guided. We believe that you are that man. The North will listen to you and to no other, and we are here in the name of humanity and civilization to implore you to save your country." The speaker was greatly affected, and after a moment Mr. Sumner said: "Sir, I am surprised that you attribute to me such influence. I will, however, assume it. Be it so. What, then, is it that you would have me do?" "We implore you, Mr. Sumner, as you love your country and your God, to vote for the Crittenden Compromise." "Sir," said Charles Sumner, rising to his lofty height, and never more Charles Sumner than in that moment, "if what you say is in-

\* Mr. Edward Everett.



deed true, and if at this moment the North trusts me, as you think, beyond all others, it is because the North knows that under no circumstances whatever would I compromise."

It was precisely because Slavery recognized this when he made his first important speech, and felt for the first time the immense force behind his words, that I call that speech so significant an event. I do not claim for Sumner deeper convictions or a sterner will than those of many of his associates. But the abolitionists, however devoted and eloquent, were only private citizens and agitators who abjured political methods. They seemed to the supreme influence in the government a band of pestilent fanatics. But Charles Sumner in the Senate, Charles Sumner in the seat of Daniel Webster, saying that the Constitution forbade him to obey the Fugitive-slave Law, was not an individual; he was a representative man. No meeting of enthusiastic men and women in a school-house had sent him to the Senate, but the legislature of a State. Nor that alone, for that legislature had not sent him as the representative of a party, but of an idea—an idea which had been powerful enough to hold its friends close together through a contest of three months, and at last, defeating the influences which had so long controlled unquestioned the politics of the State, had lifted into the Senate a man pledged only to cry *Delenda est Carthago*, and who, by the law of his mental and moral structure, could no more compromise the principle at stake than he could tell a lie. Still further, Slavery heard the young senator proudly assert that the Constitution did not recognize



slavery, except in the slave-trade clause, whose force was long since spent; that the clause upon which the Fugitive-slave Law was grounded was a mere compact conferring no power, and that every detail of the process provided was flagrantly and palpably unconstitutional. Slavery, he insisted, was sectional, liberty was national; and throwing this popular cry to the country, he irradiated his position with so splendid an illumination of illustration, precedent, argument, appeal, that it shone all over the land. How like a sunrise it strengthened and stimulated and inspired the North! It furnished the quiver of a thousand orators and newspapers, and was an exhaustless treasury of resources for the debate. Above all, it satisfied men bred in reverence of law that their duty as citizens was coincident with the dictates of their consciences, and that the Constitution justified them in withstanding the statute which their souls loathed.

This was the very service that the country needed at that time; and, that no dramatic effect should be wanting, as Henry Clay had left the Senate for the last time on the day that Mr. Sumner was sworn in,\* so, as he was making his first great plea for justice under the Constitution,† his predecessor, Daniel Webster, then Secretary of State, came into the Chamber, and also for the last time. I know no more impressive scene. There is the old senator, then the chief figure in America, who, two years before, on March 7, 1850, had made his last speech supporting the policy of the Fugitive-slave Bill, and against the Wilmot Proviso. Worn, wasted,

\* December 1, 1851.

† August 26, 1852.

sad, with powers so great and public service so renowned, the Olympian man who had sought so long, so ably, so vainly, to placate the implacable, his seventy years ending in baffled hopes and bitter disappointment and a broken heart, gazed with those eyes of depthless melancholy upon his successor. And here stands that successor, with the light of spotless youth upon his face, towering, dauntless, radiant; the indomitable Puritan, speaking as a lawyer, a statesman, and a man, not for his State alone, nor for his country only, but for human rights everywhere and always, forecasting the future, heralding the new America. As Webster looked and listened, did he recall the words of that younger man six years before in Faneuil Hall, when he prayed the party that Webster led to declare for emancipation?\*

Did he remember the impassioned appeal to himself that, as he had justly earned the title of Defender of the Constitution, so now he should devote his marvellous powers to the overthrow of slavery, and thereby win a nobler name? Alas! it was demanding dawn of the sunset! It was beseeching yesterday to return to-morrow. It was imploring Daniel Webster to be Charles Sumner. No, fellow-citizens, in that appeal Sumner forecast his own glory. "Assume, then," cried he, "these unperformed duties. The aged shall bear witness to you; the young shall kindle with rapture as they repeat the name of Webster; the large company of the ransomed shall teach their children and their children's children to the

\* In a speech on the Antislavery Duties of the Whig Party, at the Whig State Convention of Massachusetts, September 23, 1846.



latest generation to call you blessed, and you shall have yet another title, never to be forgotten on earth or in heaven, Defender of Humanity."

I dwell upon this first great speech of Mr. Sumner's in the Senate, because it illustrates his own public qualities and character, his aims and his methods. He began to take an official part in affairs when all questions were determined by a single interest, a single policy, and all issues grew out of that. His nature was so transparent and simple, and the character of his relation to his time so evident, that there is but one story to tell. All his greater speeches upon domestic topics after that of August, 1852, were but amplifications of the theme. The power that he had defied did not relax, but redoubled its efforts to subdue the country to its will, and every new attempt found Sumner with more practised powers, with more comprehensive resources, ready and eager for the battle. For the whole of his active career, before, during, and after the war, his work was substantially the same. He was essentially an orator and a moral reformer, and with unsurpassed earnestness of appeal, emphasized from first to last by the incalculable weight of his commanding character, his work was to rouse and kindle and inspire the public opinion of the country to his own uncompromising hostility to slavery. In this crusade he traversed the land, as it were, by his speeches, a new Peter the Hermit, and by his sincerity, his unconquerable zeal, his affluent learning, making history and literature and art tributary to his purpose, he entered the houses and hearts and minds of the people of the Northern States, and fanned the flame of a holy hatred



of the intolerable and audacious wrong. It was indispensable to this work that he should not be able to admit any qualification of its absorbing necessity or any abatement of the urgency with which it must be pursued. Once in later days, when I argued with him that opponents might be sincere, and that there was some reason on the other side, he thundered in reply, "Upon such a question there *is* no other side!" The time required such a leader—a man who did not believe that there was another side to the question, who would treat difference of opinion almost as moral delinquency; and the hour found the man in Sumner.

For see what the leadership of opinion in this country then demanded. In the first place, and for the reasons I have mentioned—the instinct, traditions, and habits of the dominant race in our civilization—such a leader must be a man who showed that the great principles of liberty, but of liberty under law, of what we call regulated liberty, were on his side; whose familiarity with the Constitution and with constitutional interpretation, and whose standing among lawyers who dealt with the comprehensive spirit and purpose of the law, was recognized and commanding; so that, instructed by him, the farmer in the field, the mechanic in the shop, the traveller by the way—all law-loving Americans everywhere, could maintain the contest with their neighbors point by point upon the letter of the Constitution, and show, or think they showed, that the supreme law, in its intention, in the purpose of its authors, by the unquestionable witness of the time, demanded an interpretation and a statute in favor of liberty. Then, in the second place,

this leader must be identified with a political party, for the same instinct which seeks the law and leans upon precedent acts through the organization of parties. The free-soil sentiment that sent Sumner to the Senate was the real creative force in our politics at that time. It had a distinct organization in several States. It had nominated presidential candidates at Buffalo; and although the Whig and Democratic were still the great parties, the free-soil principle was necessarily the nucleus around which a new and truly national party must presently gather. In 1852 the common enemy silenced the Whig party, which almost instantly dissolved as a powerful element in politics, and the Republican party arose. No man had done more to form the opinion and deepen the conviction from which it sprang than Sumner; no man accepted its aid with more alacrity, or saw more clearly its immense opportunity. As early as September, 1854, he declared in the State convention of his political friends, "As Republicans we go forth to encounter the oligarchs of slavery;" and eighteen years afterwards, in warning the party against what he thought to be a fatal course, he said that he had been one of the strictest of the sect, who had never failed to sustain its candidates or to advance its principles. He was, indeed, one of its fathers. No citizen who has acted with that party will question the greatness of his service to it; no citizen who opposed that party will deny it. The personal assault upon him in the Senate,\* following his prodigious defence of the Republican position and policy, and soon after the first national nominations of the

\* May 23, 1856.



party, made him throughout the inspiring summer of 1856, to the imagination of the twelve hundred thousand men who voted for its candidates, the very type and illustration of their hope and purpose. Nothing less than such humanity in the national policy and such lofty character in public life as were expressed by the name of Charles Sumner was the aim of the great political awakening of that time. The rank and file of the party, to borrow a military phrase, dressed upon Sumner; and long afterwards, when party differences had arisen, I am sure that I spoke for the great body of his political associates when I said, to one who indignantly regretted his course, that while at that time, and under those circumstances, we could not approve his judgment, yet there were thousands and thousands of men who would be startled and confused to find themselves marching in a political campaign out of step with Charles Sumner. Thus he satisfied the second imperative condition of leadership of which I speak as a conspicuous and decided party chief.

But there were certain modifications of these conditions essential to the position, and these also were found in Sumner. Such was the felicity of his career that even his defects of constitution served to equip him more fully for his task. Thus, while it was indispensable under the circumstances that he should be a constitutional and international lawyer, it was no less essential that his mind should deal more with principles than with details, and with the spirit rather than the letter. He saw so clearly the great end to be achieved that he seemed sometimes almost to assume



the means. Like an Alpine guide leading his company of travellers towards the pure and awful heights, with his eye fixed upon their celestial beauty, and his soul breathing an

“ampler ether, a diviner air,”

he moved straight on, disdaining obstacles that would have perplexed a guide less absolutely absorbed, and who by moments of doubt and hesitation would have imperilled everything.

Thus his legal mind, in the pursuit of a moral end, had sometimes what I may call a happy lack of logic. Sure of his end, and that everything ought to make for it, he felt that everything did make for it. For instance, his first great public oration, upon the “True Grandeur of Nations,”\* was a most powerful presentation of the glory and beauty of peace, and a mighty denunciation of the horrors and wrongs of war. It was an intrepid and impressive discourse, and its influence will be deep and lasting. But it overstated its own case. It exposed the citizen soldier not only to ridicule, but to moral aversion. And yet the young men who sat in martial array before the orator had not submitted to military discipline merely for the splendor of a parade, but that in the solemn and exigent hour they might the more effectively defend the public safety and private honor, the school and the hospital and social order itself, the only guarantee of peace; and all this, not at the arbitrary command of their

\* In Tremont Temple, on July 4, 1845.

own will, but by the lawful and considered word of the civil power. What is military force which he derided but, in the last resort, the law which he revered, in execution? As a friend asked him, are the judgments of Story and of Shaw advice merely? Do they not, if need be, command every bayonet in the State? Is force wrong, and must the policeman not only be prohibited from carrying a pistol or a club, but must he be forbidden to lay his hand upon the thief in the act to compel him to the station? The young citizen soldiers who sat before the orator were simply the ultimate police. To decry to them with resounding and affluent power the practice which covered war with a false lustre was a noble service, but to do it in a way that would forbid the just and lawful punishment of a murderer disclosed a defective logic. Thus Sumner sometimes used arguments that were two-edged swords, apt to wound the wielder as well as the enemy. And so he sometimes adopted propositions of constitutional or international law which led straight to his moral end, but which would hardly have endured the legal microscope. Yet he maintained them with such fervor of conviction, such an array of precedent, such amplitude of illustration, that, to the great popular mind, morally exalted like his own, his statements had the majesty and the conclusiveness of demonstrations.

And this, again, was what the time needed. The debate was essentially, although under the forms of law, revolutionary. It aimed at the displacement not only of an administration, but of a theory of the gov-



ernment and of traditional usage that did not mean to yield without a struggle. It required, therefore, not the judicially logical mind, nor the fine touch of casuistry that splits and halts and defers until the cause is lost, but the mind so absolutely alive with the idea and fixed upon the end that it compels the means. John Pym was resolved that Strafford should be impeached, and he found the law for it. Charles Sumner was resolved that slavery should fall, and he found the Constitution for it. When the great debate ended, and there was the moment of dread silence before the outburst of civil war, the legal casuistry which had found the terrors of the Fugitive-slave Law constitutional could see no power in the Constitution to coerce States. Charles Sumner, who had found in the Constitution no authority for slave-hunting, answered the furious cannonade at Fort Sumter by declaring that slavery had legally destroyed itself, and by demanding immediate emancipation.

And, as the crisis in which Sumner lived required that in a leader the qualities of a lawyer should be modified by those of the patriot and the moralist, so it demanded that the party man should be more than a partisan. He never forgot that a party is a means, not an end. He knew the joy and the power of association—no man better. He knew the history of parties everywhere—in Greece and Rome, in England and France, and in our own earlier day; and he knew how insensibly a party comes to resemble an army, and an army to stand for the country and cause which it has defended. But he knew above all that parties are kept



pure and useful only by the resolute independence of their members, and that those leaders whom, from their lofty principle and uncompromising qualities, parties do not care to nominate are the very leaders who make parties able to elect their candidates. The Republican party was organized to withstand slavery when slavery dared all. It needed, therefore, one great leader, at least, who was not merely a partisan, who did not work for party ends, but for the ends of the party. It needed a man absorbed and mastered by hostility to slavery; a man of one idea, like Columbus, with his whole soul trembling ever to the west, wearying courts and kings and councils with his single incessant and importunate plea, until he sailed over the horizon, and gave a New World to the Old; a man of one idea, like Luther, pleading his private conscience against the ancient hierarchy, and giving both worlds religious liberty. Yes, a man of one idea. This was what the time demanded in public and party life, and this it found in Charles Sumner; not an antislavery man only, but a man in whose soul for thirty years the sigh of the slave never ceased, and whose dying words were a prayer to save the bill which made that slave wholly an equal citizen.

When the Republican party came into power it was forced to conduct a war in which the very same qualities were demanded. The public mind needed constantly to be roused and sustained by the trumpet note of an ever higher endeavor, and from no leader did it hear that tone more steadily and clearly than from Sumner. When the most radical, which in such

a moment is the wisest, policy came to be discussed in detailed measures, he had already robbed it of its terrors by making it familiar. While Congress declared by a vote almost unanimous that emancipation was not a purpose or an element of the war, Sumner proclaimed to the country that slavery was perpetual war, and that emancipation only was peace. Like Nelson in the battle of the Baltic—when the admiral signalled to stop fighting he put the glass to his blind eye and shouted, "I don't see the admiral's signal; nail my own colors to the mast for closer battle!" As before the war, so, while it raged, he felt the imperial necessity of the conclusion so strongly that he made all arguments serve, and forced all facts into line. He was alive with the truth that Dryden nobly expresses: "I have heard, indeed, of some virtuous persons who have ended unfortunately, but never of any virtuous nation. Providence is engaged too deeply when the cause becomes so general." Mr. Lincoln, who was a natural diplomatist, fortunately understood Mr. Sumner. The President knew as well as the Senator that the war sprang from slavery. He had already said that the house of the Union divided against itself could not stand. He knew as well as Sumner that slavery must be smitten. But he knew also that in his position he could not smite until public opinion lifted his arm. To stimulate that opinion, therefore, was the most precious service to the President, to the country, and the world. Thus it was not the appeal to Lincoln, it was the appeal to public opinion, that was demanded. It was not Sumner's direct, but his



reflected light that was so useful. And when the President at last raised his arm—for he pulled no unripe fruit, and he did nothing until he thought the time had fully come—he knew that the country was ready, and that no man more than Sumner had made it so. When the Assistant Secretary of State carried the engrossed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation to Mr. Lincoln to sign, he had been shaking hands all the morning, so that his writing was unsteady. He looked at it for a moment with his sadly humorous smile, and then said, “When people see that shaky signature they will say, ‘See how uncertain he was.’ But I was never surer of anything in my life.”

But while Sumner righteously stimulated public opinion during the war, not less on one memorable occasion did he righteously moderate it. I once ventured to ask Mr. Seward what in his judgment was the darkest hour of the war. He answered instantly, “The time that elapsed between my informally sending to Lord Lyons a draft of my reply in the *Trent* case, and my hearing from him that it would be satisfactory.” He thought it the darkest hour, because he knew that in that reply he had made the utmost concession that public opinion would tolerate, and if it were not satisfactory, nothing remained but war with England—a war which, Mr. Adams tells us, he thinks that the British government expected, and for which it had already issued naval instructions. Mr. Sumner, who was most friendly with Mr. Seward, was chairman of the Senate Committee of Foreign Relations, and, next to his constant and inspiring consciousness that he was a



senator of Massachusetts, his position as the head of that committee was the pride and glory of his official life. Few men in the country have ever been so amply fitted for it as he was. From his youth he had been a student of international law. He was master of its history and literature. It was his hope—surely a noble ambition—to contribute to it something that might still further humanize the comity of nations. He was familiar with the current politics of the world, and he personally knew most of the distinguished foreign statesmen of his time. Above all, he brought to his chair the lofty conviction expressed by another master of international law, that “the same rules of morality which hold together men in families, and which form families into commonwealths, also link together those commonwealths as members of the great society of mankind.” He was very proud of that chairmanship; and when, in the spring of 1871, upon the annual renewal of the committees of the Senate, his Republican colleagues decided not to restore him to his chair, he felt degraded and humiliated before the country and foreign powers. He had held it for ten years. His party was still in the ascendant. His qualifications were undeniable. And he felt that the refusal to restore him implied some deep distrust or dissatisfaction, for which, whatever good reasons existed, none but the pleasure of the Senate has yet been given to the country.

While he was still chairman, and at a critical moment, the seizure of the *Trent* was hailed with frantic applause. Nothing seemed less likely than that an ad-

ministration could stand which should restore the prisoners, and Mr. Seward's letter was one of the ablest and most skilful that he ever wrote. Mr. Adams says frankly that in his judgment it saved the unity of the nation. But the impressive fact of the moment was the acquiescence of the country in the surrender, and that in great degree was due to the conclusive demonstration made by Mr. Sumner that fidelity to our own principles required the surrender. It was precisely one of the occasions when his value as a public man was plainly evident. From the crowded diplomatic gallery in the Senate attentive Europe looked and listened. His words were weighed one by one by men whom sympathy with his cause did not seduce, nor a too susceptible imagination betray, and who acknowledged when he ended, not only that the nation had escaped war, and that the action of the administration had been vindicated, but that the renown of the country had been raised by the clear and luminous statement of its humane and peaceful traditions of neutrality. "Until to-day," said one of the most accomplished of those diplomatists, "I have considered Mr. Sumner a doctrinaire; henceforth I recognize him as a statesman." He had silenced England by her historic self. He had justified America by her own honorable precedent. The country knew that he spoke from the fullest knowledge, and with the loftiest American and humane purpose, and his service in promoting national acquiescence in the surrender of the captives was as characteristic as in nerving the public mind to demand emancipation.



But while Mr. Sumner's public career was chiefly a relentless warfare with slavery, it was only because slavery was the present and palpable form of that injustice with which his nature was at war. The spring of his public life was that overpowering love of peace and justice and equality which spoke equally in his early Prison Discipline debates; in the Fourth-of-July oration in Boston; in his literary addresses; in the powerful antislavery speeches in the Senate; in his advocacy of emancipation as the true policy of the war, and of equal civil and political rights as the guarantee of its results; in his senatorial efforts to establish arbitration; in his condemnation of privateering, prize-money, and letters of marque; in his arraignment of Great Britain for a policy which favored slavery; in his unflinching persistence for the Civil Rights Bill; in his last great protest against the annexation of San Domingo, and his denunciation of what he thought a cruel and un-American hostility to the republic of Hayti. He was a born warrior with public injustice.

Many public men permit their hostility to a wrong to be modified in its expression by personal feeling, and to reflect that good men, from the influence of birth and training, may sometimes support a wrong system. But Sumner saw in his opponents not persons, but a cause, and, like Socrates, in the battle he smote to the death, but with no personal hostility. In turn he was so identified with his own cause that he seemed to his opponents to be the very spirit with which they contended, visible, aggressive, arrogant. His tone in debate when he arraigned slavery, although he



arraigned slavery alone, was so unsparing that all its supporters felt themselves to be personally insulted. After the war began I heard his speech in the Senate for the expulsion of Mr. Bright, of Indiana, for commerce with the enemy. It was a lash of scorpions. Mr. Bright sat in his place pale and livid by turns, and gazing at Mr. Sumner as if he could scarce restrain himself from springing at his throat. Yet when the orator shook his lifted finger at his colleague, and hurled at him his scathing sentences, it was not the man that he saw before him: he saw only the rebellion, only slavery in arms, with Catilinian audacity proudly thrusting itself into the Capitol, and daring to sit in the very Senate-chamber. But Mr. Sumner's attitude and tone that day, with a vast majority at his side, with a friendly army in the city, were no bolder, no more resolutely defiant, than when he stood in the same chamber demanding the expulsion of slavery from the statute-book, while the majority of his colleagues would fain have silenced him, and the city was a camp of his enemies.

It was often said that it was impossible he should know the peril of his position. It was not that. He did know it. But he saw and feared a greater peril—that of not doing his duty. He often stood practically alone among responsible public men. The spirit which begged Abraham Lincoln to strike out of his Springfield speech in 1858 the words “a house divided against itself cannot stand,” a request which Mr. Lincoln said that he would carefully consider, and having considered, spoke the words, and went straight on to the

Presidency and a glorious renown—this spirit censured Sumner's fanaticism, his devotion to one idea; derided his rhetoric, his false taste, his want of logic; ridiculed his want of tact, his ignorance of men, his visionary views, his impracticability. Indeed, there were times when it almost seemed that friends joined with foes to shear Samson's flowing hair while Samson was smiting the Philistines. If friends remonstrated, he replied, "I am a public servant. I am a sentinel of my country. I must cry 'Halt,' though it be only a shadow that passes, and not bring my piece to a rest until I know who goes there." It was an ideal vigilance, an ideal sense of duty. I grant it. He was an ideal character. He loved duty more than friendship, and he had that supreme quality of manhood, the power to go alone. I am not anxious to call him a statesman, but he seems to have measured more accurately than others the real forces of his time. Miss Martineau, in the remarkable paper published at the beginning of the war, says that every public man in the country with whom she talked agreed that silence upon slavery was the sole condition of preserving the Union. Sumner was the man who saw that silence would make the Union only the state-tomb of liberty; and that speech, constant, unshrinking, unshrinking—speech ringing over a cowering land like an alarm-bell at midnight—was the only salvation of the Union as the home of freedom.

If now for a moment we turn to survey that public career, extending over the thirty stormiest years of our history, the one clear, conspicuous fact that appears in it, after the single devotion to one end, is that Mr.



Sumner lived to see that end accomplished. He began by urging the Whig party to raise the antislavery standard. It refused. He left the party, and presently it perished. He entered the Senate denouncing slavery in a manner that roused and strengthened the public mind for the contest that soon began. With the first gun of the war he demanded emancipation as the way of victory; and when victory with emancipation came, he advocated equal suffrage as the security of liberty. What public man has seen more glorious fulfilments of his aims and efforts? He did not, indeed, originate the laws that enacted the results, but he developed the spirit and the conviction that made the results possible. William III. won few battles, but he gained his cause; Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration, but John Adams is the hero of American independence. Sumner was more a moral reformer than a statesman, and to a surprising degree events were his allies. But no man of our first great period, not Otis or Patrick Henry, nor Jefferson or Adams, nor Hamilton or Jay, is surer of his place than in the second great period Charles Sumner is sure of his.

As his career drew to an end, events occurred without which his life would not have been wholly complete, and the most signal illustration of the power of personal character in politics would have been lost. He was, as I have said, a party man. Although always in advance, and by his genius a moral leader, he had yet always worked with and by his party. But, as the main objects of his political activity were virtually accomplished, he came to believe that his party, reckless



in absolute triumph, was ceasing to represent that high and generous patriotism to which his life was consecrated, that its moral tone was sensibly declining, that it defended policies hostile to public faith and human rights, trusting leaders who should not be trusted, and tolerating practices that honest men should spurn. Believing that his party was forfeiting the confidence of the country, he reasoned with it and appealed to it, as, more than twenty years before, he had reasoned with the Whig party in Faneuil Hall. His hope was, by his speeches on the San Domingo treaty and the French arms and the Presidential nomination, to shake what he thought to be the fatal apathy of the party, and to stimulate it once more to resume its leadership of the conscience and the patriotism of the country. It was my fortune to see him constantly and intimately during those days, to know the persuasions and flatteries lavished upon him to induce him to declare openly against the party, and his resolution not to leave it until he had exhausted every argument and prayer, and conscience forbade him to remain. That summons came, in his judgment, when a nomination was made which seemed to him the conclusive proof of a fatal party infatuation. "Anything else," he said to me, vehemently, a hundred times—"any other candidacy I can support, and it would save the party and the country." The nomination was made. He did not hesitate. He was sixty years old; smitten with sorrows that were not known; suffering at times acute agony from the disease of which he died; his heart heavy with the fierce strife of a generation, and long-

ing for repose. But the familiar challenge of duty found him alert and watchful at his post, and he advanced without a doubt or a fear to what was undoubtedly the greatest trial of his life.

The antislavery contest, indeed, had closed many a door and many a heart against him; it had exposed him to the sneer, the hate, the ridicule, of opposition; it had threatened his life and assailed his person. But the great issue was clearly drawn; his whole being was stirred to its depths; he was in the bloom of youth, the pride of strength; history and reason, the human heart and the human conscience, were his immortal allies, and around him were the vast, increasing hosts of liberty; the men whose counsels he approved; the friends of his heart; the multitude that thought him only too eager for unquestionable right; the prayer of free men and women, sustaining, inspiring, blessing him. But here was another scene, a far fiercer trial. His old companions in the Free-soil days, the great abolition leaders, most of his warmest personal friends, the great body of the party whom his words had inspired, looked at him with sorrowful surprise. Ah! no one who did not know that proud and tender heart, trusting, simple, almost credulous as that of a boy, could know how sore the trial was. He stood, among his oldest friends, virtually alone; with inexpressible pain they parted, each to his own duty. "Are you willing," I said to him one day, when he had passionately implored me to agree with him—and I should have been unworthy his friendship had I been silent—"is Charles Sumner willing at this time, and in the



circumstances of to-day, to intrust the colored race in this country with all their rights, their liberty newly won and yet flexile and nascent, to a party, however fair its profession, which comprises all who have hated and despised the negro? The slave of yesterday in Alabama, in Carolina, in Mississippi, will his heart leap with joy or droop dismayed when he knows that Charles Sumner has given his great name as a club to smite the party that gave him and his children their liberty?" The tears started to his eyes, that good gray head bowed down, but he answered, sadly, "I must do my duty." And he did it. He saw the proud, triumphant party that he had led so often—men and women whom his heart loved, the trusted friends of a life, the sympathy and confidence and admiration upon which, on his great days and after his resounding words, he had been joyfully accustomed to lean—he saw all these depart, and he turned to go alone and do his duty.

Yet, great as was his sorrow, still greater, as I believe, was his content in doing that duty. His State, indeed, could not follow him. For the first time in his life he went one way, and Massachusetts went the other. But Massachusetts was as true to her convictions of duty in that hour as he was to his own. It was her profound belief that the result he sought would be perilous, if not fatal, to the welfare of the country. But the inspiring moral of these events is this, that, while deploring his judgment in this single case, and while, later, the Legislature, misconceiving his noble and humane purpose, censured him for the resolutions



which the people of the State did not understand, and which they believed, most unjustly to him, to be somehow a wrong to the precious dead, the flower of a thousand homes—yet, despite all this, the great heart of Massachusetts never swerved from Charles Sumner. It was grieved and amazed, and could not forego its own duty because he saw another. But I know that when in that year I spoke in rural Massachusetts, whether in public or in private, to those who, with me, could not follow him, nothing that I said was heard with more sympathy and applause than my declaration of undying honor and gratitude to him. "I seem to lean on the great heart of Massachusetts," he said, in the bitterest hour of the conflict of his life. And it never betrayed him. In that heart not the least suspicion of a mean or selfish motive ever clouded his image—not a doubt of his absolute fidelity to his conscience disturbed its faith; and had he died a year ago, while yet the censure of the Legislature was unrepealed, his body would have been received by you with the same affectionate reverence; here, and in Faneuil Hall, and at the State-house, all honor that boundless gratitude and admiration could lavish would have been poured forth, and yonder in Mount Auburn he would have been laid to rest with the same immense tenderness of sorrow.

This is the great victory, the great lesson, the great legacy of his life, that the fidelity of a public man to conscience, not to party, is rewarded with the sincerest popular love and confidence. What an inspiration to every youth longing with generous ambition to

enter the great arena of the State, that he must heed first and always the divine voice in his own soul, if he would be sure of the sweet voices of good fame! Living, how Sumner served us! and dying, at this moment how he serves us still! In a time when politics seem peculiarly mean and selfish and corrupt, when there is a general vague apprehension that the very moral foundations of the national character are loosened, when good men are painfully anxious to know whether the heart of the people is hardened, Charles Sumner dies; and the universality and sincerity of sorrow, such as the death of no man left living among us could awaken, show how true, how sound, how generous, is still the heart of the American people. This is the dying service of Charles Sumner, a revelation which inspires every American to bind his shining example as a frontlet between the eyes, and never again to despair of the higher and more glorious destiny of his country.

And of that destiny what a foreshowing was he! In that beautiful home at the sunny and leafy corner of the national city, where he lived among books and pictures and noble friendships and lofty thoughts—the home to which he returned at the close of each day in the Senate, and to which the wise and good from every land naturally came—how the stately and gracious and all-accomplished man seemed the very personification of that new union for which he had so manfully striven, and whose coming his dying eyes beheld—the union of ever-wider liberty and juster law, the America of comprehensive intelligence and

of moral power! For that he stands; up to that his imperishable memory, like the words of his living lips, forever lifts us—lifts us to his own great faith in America and in man. Suddenly from his strong hand—my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!—the banner falls. Be it ours to grasp it, and carry it still forward, still higher! Our work is not his work, but it can be well done only in his spirit. And as, in the heroic legend of your western valley, the men of Hadley, faltering in the fierce shock of Indian battle, suddenly saw at their head the lofty form of an unknown captain, with white hair streaming on the wind, by his triumphant mien strengthening their hearts and leading them to victory, so, men and women of Massachusetts, of America, if, in that national conflict already begun, as vast and vital as the struggle of his life, the contest which is beyond that of any party or policy or measure—the contest for conscience, intelligence, and morality as the supreme power in our politics and the sole salvation of America—you should falter or fail, suddenly your hearts shall see once more the towering form, shall hear again the inspiring voice, shall be exalted with the moral energy and faith of Charles Sumner, and the victories of his immortal example shall transcend the triumphs of his life.



**GARFIELD**

**AN ADDRESS MADE IN THE TOWN HALL OF ASHFIELD, MASS.,  
ON THE DAY OF THE BURIAL OF PRESIDENT GARFIELD,  
SEPTEMBER 26, 1881**



## GARFIELD

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THE country is at peace with itself and with all the world. It was never so united, its prospects were never more fair, nor its increasing power and prosperity seemingly more assured, and yet we meet amid a grief unparalleled in history, a sorrow which has touched the heart of Christendom, and brought every nation to our side in sympathy as brothers and friends. When William of Orange died by the assassin's hand, the little children, says the historian, cried in the street. His countrymen might well have trembled, for when William fell, the little State itself tottered. Garfield also falls by the assassin's hand, and although the peaceful continuity of the government is not even jarred, the sorrow is more world-wide and pathetic than ever before lamented a human being. In distant lands men bow their heads. The courts of kings are clad in mourning. The parish bells of rural England toll, and every American household is hushed with pain as if its first-born lay dead.

It is an unequalled tribute, not to the ruler of a royal line, not to the lord of an historic house, but to a plain republican citizen elevated by the free will of his fellow-



citizens to one of the highest of earthly positions, and whose bearing there amid mortal peril in the daily and hourly view of the world, hearing every word and watching every act for three months, has been so manly and composed, that respect for the magistrate has been lost in admiration for the man.

"He nothing common did or mean  
Upon that memorable scene."

The imminence of the sudden and disastrous end of all human ambition, the prolonged torture of physical pain, the irreparable loss of vital strength, the clear perception of every symptom, and the full comprehension of its significance, the silent apprehension of his country, the touching sympathy of the world, the speechless sorrow of mother, wife, and child,—all these did not touch the serenity of that lofty courage, of that noble manhood; and while his country bowed in fervent prayer for the sufferer, his unquailing faith and steady soul sustained his country.

It was a life pure as a child's, brave as a hero's. By the simple force of honest manhood the boy of the canal-boat had become the man of the White House, and had shown that, under the benign influence of freedom, a noble spirit, with purity of life, intellectual power, and untiring devotion, may make the tow-path the avenue to the highest earthly honors. It was a life of great occasions greatly used. It had reached the threshold of greater opportunities, the greatest, perhaps, that the world offers to any man, and it had reached it amid joyful confidence that the strong hand and high heart

would guide favoring events to glorious issues. Suddenly the hand drops, the heart stands still—"my captain, O my captain!"—in the glowing prime of vigorous manhood, with his bright face towards the future and his strong hand upon the helm, he falls—and rises again and forever in the undying affection of his country. What Milton says of Samson, how truly even in this hour may we say of Garfield:

"Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail  
Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,  
Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,  
And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

What other human being in high place, what other man living, would be so closely held to the heart, so lifted upon the prayers and grief of a great nation? It is an extraordinary spectacle, and we may well assemble to consider its significance.

Undoubtedly it was the long and conspicuous martyrdom of his last illness that drew to him so closely the affection and admiration of the world. But this is only to say that the mortal peril revealed more completely the essential quality of the man, a quality which in all its nature and fulness we might not otherwise have known. That supreme quality, it seems to me, lying behind all his intellectual activities, the corner-stone of his life as student, soldier, and statesman, may be defined in one word: it was a healthy conscience. From the first glimpse that we have of him—and we see him first as a little boy four years old studying in the district school—he had an omnipresent and overwhelming sense of duty. His father's house was that of a poor farmer,



and James was an infant when his father died. As soon as he was large enough he was put to work upon the farm. The whole family worked, and none so hard as the mother. She spun and wove and knit and cooked. Within the house all fell upon her, and out of the house she helped to plant and hoe and gather the crops, and even to clear and fence the land. They all worked hard, and the boy worked hard to the end. He went to the district school and fought for the small boys who had no older brother to protect them, and at sixteen he walked off with another boy, and offered himself to cut hay. He asked a man's wages, which the farmer refused. "Then we'll mow that field by the acre," said the boy, and, putting his conscience into his scythe, the grass was down by four o'clock and the farmer gave him his own terms. This country is full of poor boys like Garfield who are obliged to work hard for a living. Let them follow Garfield's course from the farmer's field to the ash leachery, to the tow-path, to the canal-boat, to the carpenter's shop, and they will see that, while poverty made him work, conscience made him work honestly, so that his work helped him not only to live, but to get better work and better means of working. His strong passion was to be a sailor. The wide waters of Lake Erie touched his romantic boy's heart with the charm of the sea that draws so many boys with resistless fascination. I remember, when I was crossing the ocean, one of the sailors told me that he was a boy from the hills in central New York. He ran away to sea and his family begged him to return. After a few voyages he came back, and tried to be happy on



the farm. But he said that in the night he heard the rustling of the trees in the wind, and, like the distant murmuring of the ocean, it seemed mournfully to chide his desertion. At last he had left the hills, and should return no more. The intense longing for the sea which at the very last made Garfield so impatient to escape from Washington was perhaps a reawakening of that old passion, and as he lay dying, the last yearning glance of his wistful eyes was turned towards the peaceful, sunny ocean; but with what unutterable thoughts in his great and resolute soul, what contrasts with the eager look of the boy of the canal-boat towards the laughing waves of Lake Erie! But Garfield's mother's voice was more persuasive than that of the sea. He turned to study, and with the same energy and conscience, working as hard for his education as he worked for his living: sweeping the floor and ringing the bell and making the fires at the Academy; haying and building and teaching to pay his way, he set his heart upon going to college, and, after studying until he thought himself fitted, he wrote to the presidents of Yale, Williams, and Brown, stating what he had done, and asking what class he could enter. They all answered that he could enter the Junior class. President Hopkins of Williams said, "If you come here we will do what we can for you." The kind word brought him into the hills of western Massachusetts, and has given to them another undying tradition.

During the student days at Williams, as professor and then principal in the Hiram Academy, as law student and legislator, there was always the same industry and

supreme sense of duty. No priggishness, no goodishness; but no waste of time, no squandering of powers, no small vices, and a joyful cheerfulness and strength in every pursuit. From his earliest days he had heard much talk of religion. His mother read the Bible daily. His uncle, a second father of the family, carried a Testament in his pocket and had an apt scriptural word for every event. When Garfield was a boy, northern Ohio teemed with new sects and the air hummed with vehement controversy. When he was twenty he joined the communion of the Campbellites, and in that communion he lived and died. But his manly and robust temperament kept his religious feeling simple and sweet. It confirmed and consecrated his fidelity. His mother was sprung from the blood of Huguenots who settled in Rhode Island with Roger Williams, the apostle of soul-liberty, and Garfield kept unsoiled his generous catholicity of soul.

But after he had graduated, while he was serving in the State Legislature and preparing to begin at Cleveland the practice of the law, the great political controversy of the last generation culminated in civil war, and from his place in the Senate of the State he announced that he should go to the field. He marched at the head of a regiment, and his first service was one of the most important of the war. With his raw regiment and without artillery he was ordered to drive from a half-hostile State a force of five thousand men with heavy guns, commanded by an old soldier of the Mexican war. Garfield's mental clearness and quickness, his force and energy — in a word, his moral efficiency, was



never more evident. The enemy was driven out of Kentucky; Buell's army was relieved. Buell was full of praise for Colonel Garfield. The loyal West echoed his praise with enthusiasm, and the canal-boat boy became a brigadier-general. His military career was singularly romantic, but it was as signally effective. The intelligent self-reliance of sound judgment and untiring energy were still the key. When a tremendous storm in the mountainous country where he was serving swelled the streams to angry torrents, he was at the mouth of a river, upon whose upper shores his army was lying with short rations and with no possible supply from the neighboring country. He ordered a small steamer to take supplies and start up the stream. The captain protested that it was sure destruction. But Garfield ordered the captain and the crew on board, detailed a guard to see that they did their duty, and himself took the wheel. The little boat shivered in the wild whirling waters, but, tremblingly obedient to his firm hand, she slowly strained along. At nightfall the captain begged to tie up, for in the darkness destruction was sure. Garfield ordered every man to keep his place, and pushed on in the night; but one of the swift leaps of the river drove the boat into the bank. The general ordered a boat to be lowered to carry a line to the other shore. The crew, paralyzed with fear, would not stir. Garfield sprang into the boat and steered it across. He was swept far below his point, but made fast to a tree, rigged a windlass, drew the steamer off, headed her again for his boys, reached them safely with the supplies, and in the tumult of their enthu-



siasm could scarce save himself from being borne in triumph upon their shoulders. So, at the battle of Chickamauga, when Garfield's proved military capacity had made him chief of staff to General Rosecrans, a fatal order of the general's imperilled the day, and the general and his staff were caught up and swept along on what seemed the mad flight of a routed army. Garfield begged to be sent back to Thomas, who was ignorant of Rosecran's retreat and was in danger of being overwhelmed. Through a fiery storm of shot, under which most of his escort fell, Garfield pushed on, found Thomas, and enabled him to withdraw, while the enemy also retired, believing himself to be repulsed. The Union army fell back, but with the leader's instinct Garfield never believed the battle to have been lost, and for his conduct at Chickamauga he was made a major-general.

This was not quixotism. It was the conduct of a man who sees clearly what must be done and how it must be done, and who sees as clearly that he is the man who must decide and act, and compel others to act with him. This is the instinct of a leader. It is the moral power which men instinctively obey, and which makes a peaceful republic possible, because the normal action of a republic gives play to natural leadership.

But while he was serving the country on one field he was called to serve it in another. While still in the army he was elected to Congress, and eighteen years ago he entered the House of Representatives.

Throughout his legislative career the same overpower-

ing conscience and natural mastery are evident which distinguished his studious youth and his military service. Few Americans in public life ever had a higher sense of its responsibilities, among which he counted careful preparation. Garfield scorned the happy-go-lucky theory that an American public man needs little knowledge or training, because a special providence presides over the United States and drunken men. If the republic is to be an increasing blessing to mankind, it can be so only through the constantly loftier character and broader intelligence of its citizens. While others might swagger and declaim, Garfield studied and reflected, and so to the practical sagacity he was always adding the ample knowledge and the disciplined mind which no statesman can spare. Like many another vigorous statesman of the English race, he took especial delight in the Roman poet Horace, and the most famous lines of that poet are chanted at this moment in Cleveland over his grave, and to no man were they ever more worthily applied.

"Integer vitæ scelerisque purus."  
(Upright of life and free from sin.)

So, when the war ended and he foresaw that the financial question must be soon absorbing, he asked to be relieved from the Military Committee, and to be placed upon that of the Ways and Means. With the eager devotion of his earlier days in securing an education, he gave himself to a complete study of the great question of finance, learning the French language (for the German he had already acquired), that he might ex-



plore the experience of every country, and acquaint himself with the views of the great masters both of financial theory and practice. Thus thoroughly equipped, he showed himself at once strong and steady among those who fought without compromise and triumphantly for the true financial faith that the national pledge must be redeemed to the uttermost, and be redeemed as honestly as it was made.

The true leaders are those who feel that they are themselves led, and who know that causes are mightier than men; and Garfield knew that parties are greater than their representatives, and that it is principles, not leaders, which make them permanent and strong. Charles Fox said that no man was as wise as Lord Thurlow looked. So no man is as important to a party as some men suppose themselves to be. Garfield's leadership did not impose itself arbitrarily upon others. It was persuasive and resistless by sincere superiority. It may be compared in English history with that of Lord Somers. But if in our own annals it was less brilliant than the Murat-like dash of Henry Clay, and less dictatorial and defiant than that of Thaddeus Stevens, it was because Garfield was more of a constructive statesman, and because the revolutionary crisis had passed. His comprehensive and clear perception showed him that with slavery the old political epoch was really gone, and that practical politics, which had turned for a generation upon the interpretation of the Constitution, were to be now more concerned with methods of administration. The day of fiery appeal to the passion of patriotism had given



place to that of reason and argument. Garfield's fairness and moderation, which were sometimes impatiently interpreted by angry party spirit as weakness, are now seen, in the revealing light of the last three months of his life, in which, amid wasting suffering his patient soul smiled serene, to have been that courage of the finest temper which dares to be just, which is the very genius of statesmanship, and which alone composes angry States and factions. What Motley says of William of Orange may be again as truly said of Garfield, "Whether originally of a timid temperament or not, he was certainly possessed of perfect courage at last." No man more earnestly desired sympathy and the love of his comrades. But he only is the true leader who is able, if need be, to go alone. When Garfield was chief of staff to General Rosecrans, and the general asked his sixteen commanders, among whom were old officers of the army, whether to advance in the spring of 1863, every one of them opposed the movement. But Garfield, collating all the written opinions, argued against them. He stood absolutely alone. But his reasoning was so cogent and powerful that it was decisive and the army moved. So in Congress, soon after he entered, he voted alone in the midst of the war against a party measure, but so clearly defined his position that his party relations were not disturbed. When old Ben Wade and Henry Winter Davis criticised President Lincoln for his conduct in the question of reconstruction in Arkansas and Louisiana, Garfield opposed their course and was called to account by his constituents. He went among them, and publicly repeated his

approval, telling them that he had great respect for their opinion, but greater for his own. If he could serve them as an independent representative acting upon his own judgment and conscience, he would gladly do so; if not, he was sorry, but he could not change his convictions for a seat in Congress. His constituents knew a man when they saw him. He was renominated by acclamation, and re-elected by more than twelve thousand majority. So, when the flood of financial sophistry broke over the West, and many of his most eminent political associates were swept from their moorings by what seemed the overwhelming popularity of a lie, Garfield held fast to the truth, the truth upon which our prosperity is rooted to-day. Then burst the storm of calumny, which was renewed when he was nominated to the Presidency. The rains descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon his character, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.

His manly courage in all these contests, his power to stand alone, if it must be so, came from the same moral nerve which kept his tongue sweet and just towards his opponents in the fury of congressional debate; which smiled in his playful reply to the physician who, after the murderous shot, told him that there was one chance for his life, "Very well, Doctor, we will take that;" and which spoke the whisper of the last day of his life when, looking into the mirror, he said, "It is strange that so weak a man should look so bright." It was the moral heroism which, when his frame had shrunken to a shadow and his voice had weakened to a whisper, still



cheered his room like sunshine and made him the noblest man among us all.

The President's death is an event which suddenly clouds the bright prospects of the country, not because there will be any interruption of the peaceful order of the government, but because a man so remarkably fitted for the Presidency by character, ability, experience, temperament, and training, in whom all sections and all parties had come to have profound confidence, has been removed from his high place. In manliness and gentleness of nature ; in loftiness of public spirit and disciplined intelligence for public affairs ; in strength of political conviction, blended with singular moderation and tempered urbanity of expression ; in steady self-command, modesty of bearing, and simplicity of life, the President was the type of the American to whom American hearts are instinctively loyal. It was the impression of this singular fitness both by character and capacity, illuminated and illustrated as it was by the unspeakable pathos of his sick-chamber, which had dissipated political animosity, and which would have left him, had Heaven willed that he should emerge from the dark valley, panoplied with powers and solicited by opportunities for beneficent administration which no man could more truly comprehend. But it is not to be. The bowl is broken at the fountain. The hopes that anticipated great results, as the dawn heralds the day, have vanished. The brave, patient, high-hearted man, upon whose fluttering breath hung the prayerful hopes of his country, can now give to the fulfilment of his own work only the mighty and hallowed inspiration



of his memory. For Garfield himself it is not to be doubted that he died at the fortunate moment, with the love of all his countrymen like brothers lamenting him, and their faith firm in the great and humane work that he was sure to do.

My neighbors and friends, we cannot recall the dead, but the dead may inspire us to live to a higher purpose. The assassination of the President was not a wanton and causeless crime. It was part of the penalty that we pay for permitting a practice for which as a public benefit not a solitary word can be urged, and which, while stimulating the deadliest passions, degrades our politics and corrupts our character.

There are thousands of men in every part of the country who, because like Guiteau they made campaign speeches, or busied themselves in campaign clubs, or gave money or time or labor in some way to promote the election of President Garfield, feel, as Guiteau felt, that they are entitled to be paid for it by a place in a custom-house or a post-office or a department in Washington, or in some other of the myriad public offices and employments, and that those who now occupy such places have had their share, and ought to be turned out to make room for new men. If, in the opinion of such men, their "claims are not recognized," like Guiteau they believe themselves to be "outrageously wronged." But if with this feeling they hear the President stigmatized as false to his party and treacherous to his supporters, any one of them, morbidly and angrily brooding over his disappointment, may at any moment be stung into a resolution to revenge both

himself and his party by a deadly blow. Such a man sees in a new President a new chance for himself, and thus the spoils system, working on a weak brain, instigates assassination.

It will not be denied that if there had been a reasonable regulation of appointments in the civil service which secured them to proved merit instead of party "work," Guiteau would not have assassinated President Garfield. A madman, of course, might shoot any one. But, except for the doctrine that the whole civil service is the spoils and plunder of a victorious party, the President would not have been assassinated by Guiteau. Is it not time for an intelligent and self-respecting people to abolish an evil for which nothing is to be said but that it is an alarming abuse, mistakenly thought to be essential to party organization and efficiency? Could there be a more significant and impressive lesson drawn from the national sorrow than that the spoils system stimulates such crimes, and that the brave and beloved President has fallen a victim to a vast public evil, whose nature and tendency no man has more clearly described than he? Lincoln was the martyr of emancipation. Garfield is the martyr of civil-service reform.

Even as I speak to you he is laid in his grave amid all the mournful magnificence of funeral pomp that a mighty nation can lavish upon a beloved citizen who has given his life for his country. The bells toll from sea to sea. The air is hushed with the voice of prayer, and sighs with melodious requiems. Never in our time, nor in that of our fathers, did a common emotion so obliterate party lines, or unite again so surely long-

estranged sections of the country, or so tenderly blend the sympathy of the Old World and the New. Shall we say that he dies too soon whose death so serves his fellow-men? From the ocean to the Capital, and from the Capital to the shore of the lake whose boundless waters first allured his generous soul from the narrow circumstance of his birth, I seem to see the endless procession of a grateful nation, and the triumphal burial-rites of a great pacificator and patriot; and, as his form vanishes from sight forever, I hear the words of heavenly cheer, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."



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WENDELL PHILLIPS

A EULOGY DELIVERED BEFORE THE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES  
OF BOSTON, MASS., APRIL 18, 1884



## WENDELL PHILLIPS

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MASSACHUSETTS is always rich in fitting voices to commemorate the virtues and services of her illustrious citizens, and in every strain of affectionate admiration and thoughtful discrimination, the legislature, the pulpit, and the press; his old associates, who saw the glory of his prime; the younger generation, which cherishes the tradition of his devoted life, have spoken the praise of Wendell Phillips. But his native city has justly thought that the great work of his life was not local or limited; that it was as large as liberty and as broad as humanity; and that his name, therefore, is not the treasure of a State only, but a national possession. An orator whose consecrated eloquence—like the music of Amphion raising the wall of Thebes—was a chief force in giving to the American Union the impregnable defence of freedom, is a common benefactor: the West may well answer to the East, the South to the North; and Carolina and California, Minnesota and New York mingle their sorrow with that of New England, and own in his death a common bereavement.

At other times, with every mournful ceremony of respect, the commonwealth and its chief city have la-



mented their dead sons, conspicuous party leaders, who, in high official place, and with the formal commission of the State, have worthily maintained the ancient renown and the lofty faith of Massachusetts. But it is a private citizen whom we commemorate to-day, yet a public leader; a man always foremost in political controversy, but who held no office, and belonged to no political party; who swayed votes, but who seldom voted, and never for a mere party purpose; and who, for the larger part of his active life, spurned the Constitution as a bond of iniquity, and the Union as a yoke of oppression. Yet, the official authority which decrees this commemoration, this great assembly which honors his memory, the press, which from sea to sea has celebrated his name, and I, who at your summons stand here to speak his eulogy, are all loyal to party, all revere the Constitution and maintain the Union, all hold the ballot to be the most sacred trust, and voting to be the highest duty of the citizen. As we recall the story of that life, the spectacle of to-day is one of the most significant in our history. This memorial rite is not a tribute to official service, to literary genius, to scientific distinction; it is homage to personal character. It is the solemn public declaration that a life of transcendent purity of purpose, blended with commanding powers, devoted with absolute unselfishness, and with amazing results, to the welfare of the country and of humanity, is, in the American republic, an example so inspiring, a patriotism so lofty, and a public service so beneficent, that, in contemplating them, discordant opinions, differing judgments, and the sharp sting of contro-

versial speech, vanish like frost in a flood of sunshine. It is not the Samuel Adams who was impatient of Washington, and who doubted the Constitution, but the Samuel Adams of Faneuil Hall, of the Committee of Correspondence, of Concord and Lexington—Samuel Adams, the father of the Revolution, whom Massachusetts and America remember and revere.

The Revolutionary tradition was the native air of Wendell Phillips. When he was born in this city, seventy-three years ago last November, some of the chief Revolutionary figures still lingered. John Adams was living at Quincy, and Thomas Jefferson at Monticello; Elbridge Gerry was governor of the State, James Madison was President, and the second war with England was at hand. Phillips was nine years old when, in 1820, the most important debate after the adoption of the Constitution, the debate of whose tumultuous culmination and triumphant close he was to be the great orator, began; and the second heroic epoch of our history, in which he was a master-figure, opened in the long and threatening contest over the admission of Missouri. Unheeding the transactions which were shaking the land and setting the scene of his career, the young boy, of the best New England lineage and prospects, played upon Beacon Hill, and at the age of sixteen entered Harvard College. His classmates recall his manly pride and reserve, with the charming manner, the delightful conversation, and the affluence of kindly humor, which were never lost. He sauntered and gently studied; not a devoted student, not in the bent of his mind nor in the special direction of sympathy



forecasting the reformer, but already the orator and the easy master of the college platform; and still, in the memory of his old companions, he walks those college paths in unfading youth, a figure of patrician port, of sovereign grace—a prince coming to his kingdom.

The tranquil years at the university ended, and he graduated in 1831, the year of Nat Turner's insurrection in Virginia, the year, also, in which Mr. Garrison issued the *Liberator*, and, for unequivocally proclaiming the principle of the Declaration of Independence, was denounced as a public enemy. Like other gently nurtured Boston boys, Phillips began the study of law, and, as it proceeded, doubtless the sirens sang to him, as to the noble youth of every country and time. If, musing over Coke and Blackstone, in the full consciousness of ample powers and of fortunate opportunities, he sometimes forecast the future, he doubtless saw himself succeeding Fisher Ames, and Harrison Gray Otis, and Daniel Webster, rising from the Bar to the Legislature, from the Legislature to the Senate, from the Senate—who knew whither?—the idol of society, the applauded orator, the brilliant champion of the elegant repose and the cultivated conservatism of Massachusetts. The delight of social ease, the refined enjoyment of taste in letters and art, opulent leisure, professional distinction, gratified ambition—all these came and whispered to the young student. And it is the force that can tranquilly put aside such blandishments with a smile, and accept alienation, outlawry, ignominy, and apparent defeat, if need be, no less than the courage which grapples with poverty and outward hardship, and climbs over them to



worldly prosperity, which is the test of the finest manhood. Only he who fully knows the worth of what he renounces gains the true blessing of renunciation.

The time during which Phillips was studying law was the hour of the profoundest moral apathy in the history of this country. The fervor of Revolutionary feeling was long since spent, and that of the final antislavery contest was but just kindled. The question of slavery indeed had never been quite forgotten. There was always an antislavery sentiment in the country, but there was also a slavery interest, and the invention of the cotton-gin in 1789 gave slavery the most powerful and insidious impulse that it had ever received. At once commercial greed was allied with political advantage and social power, and the active antislavery sentiment rapidly declined. Ten years after the invention of the cotton-gin, the general convention of the abolition societies deplored the decay of public interest in emancipation. Thirty-five years later, in 1833, while Phillips was still studying law, the veteran Pennsylvania Society lamented that since 1794 it had seen one after another of those societies disband, until it was left almost alone to mourn the universal apathy. When Wendell Phillips was admitted to the bar in 1834, the slave interest in the United States, intrenched in the Constitution, in trade, in the Church, in society, in historic tradition, and in the prejudice of race, had already become, although unconsciously to the country, one of the most powerful forces in the world. The English throne in 1625, the old French monarchy in 1780, the English aristocracy at the beginning of the century, were not so strong as

slavery in this country fifty years ago. The grasp of England upon the American colonies before the Revolution was not so sure, and was never so menacing to liberty upon this continent, as the grasp of slavery upon the Union in the pleasant days when the young lawyer sat in his office careless of the antislavery agitation, and jesting with his old college comrades over the clients who did not come.

But on an October afternoon, in 1835, while he was still sitting expectant in his office, the long-awaited client came, but in what an amazing form! The young lawyer was especially a Boston boy. He loved his native city with that lofty pride and intensity of local affection which is peculiar to her citizens. "I was born in Boston," he said long afterwards, "and the good name of the old town is bound up with every fibre of my heart." In the mild afternoon his windows were open, and the sound of unusual disturbance drew him from his office. He hastened along the street, and suddenly, a stone's-throw from the scene of the Boston Massacre, in the very shadow of the old South, he beheld in Boston a spectacle which Boston cannot now conceive. He saw American women insulted for befriending their innocent sisters, whose children were sold from their arms. He saw an American citizen assailed by a furious mob in the city of James Otis, for saying, with James Otis, that a man's right to liberty is inherent and inalienable. Himself a citizen soldier, he looked to see the majesty of the people maintaining the authority of law; but, to his own startled surprise, he saw that the rightful defenders of law against the mob were themselves the



mob. The city, whose dauntless free speech had taught a country how to be independent, he saw raising a par-ricidal hand against its parent—Liberty. It was enough. As the jail-doors closed upon Garrison to save his life, Garrison and his cause had won their most powerful and renowned ally. With the setting of that October sun vanished forever the career of prosperous ease, the grat-ification of ordinary ambition which the genius and the accomplishment of Wendell Phillips had seemed to fore-tell. Yes, the long-awaited client had come at last. Scarred, scorned, and forsaken, that cowering and friend-less client was wronged and degraded humanity. The great soul saw and understood.

"So nigh is grandeur to our dust,  
So near is God to man,  
When duty whispers low, *Thou must,*  
The youth replies, *I can.*"

Already the Boston boy felt what he afterwards said, "I love inexpressibly these streets of Boston, over which my mother led my baby feet, and if God grants me time enough I will make them too pure for the footsteps of a slave." And we, fellow-citizens, who recall the life and the man, the untiring sacrifice, the complete surrender, do we not hear in the soft air of that long-vanished Oc-tober day, far above the riot of the stormy street, the benediction that he could not hear, but whose influence breathed always from the ineffable sweetness of his smile and the gracious courtesy of his manner, "Inasmuch as thou hast done it to the least of these, my brethren, thou hast done it unto me."

The scene of that day is an illustration of the time.



As we look back upon it it is incredible. But it was not until Lovejoy fell, while defending his press at Alton, in November, 1837, that an American citizen was killed by a raging mob for declaring, in a free State, the right of innocent men and women to their personal liberty. This tragedy, like the deadly blow at Charles Sumner in the Senate Chamber, twenty years afterwards, awed the whole country with a sense of vast and momentous peril. The country has just been startled by the terrible riot at Cincinnati, which sprang from the public consciousness that by crafty legal quibbling crime had become secure. But the outbreak was at once and universally condemned, because, in this country, whatever the wrong may be, reform by riot is always worse than the wrong. The Alton riot, however, had no redeeming impulse. It was the very frenzy of lawlessness, a sudden and ghastly glimpse of the unquenchable fires of passion that were burning under the seeming peace and prosperity of the Union. How fierce and far-reaching those passions were, was seen not only in the riot itself, but in the refusal of Faneuil Hall for a public meeting to denounce the appalling wrong to American liberty which had been done in Illinois, lest the patriotic protest of the meeting should be interpreted by the country as the voice of Boston. But the refusal was reconsidered, and never since the people of Boston thronged Faneuil Hall, on the day after the massacre in State Street, had that ancient hall seen a more solemn and significant assembly. It was the more solemn, the more significant, because the excited multitude was no longer, as in the Revolutionary day, inspired by one unanimous and overwhelm-

ing purpose to assert and maintain liberty of speech as the bulwark of all other liberty. It was an unwonted and foreboding scene. An evil spirit was in the air.

When the seemingly protest against the monstrous crime had been spoken, and the proper duty of the day was done, a voice was heard, the voice of the high officer solemnly sworn to prosecute in the name of Massachusetts every violation of law, declaring, in Faneuil Hall, sixty years after the battle of Bunker Hill, and amid a howling storm of applause, that an American citizen who was put to death by a mad crowd of his fellow-citizens for defending his right of free speech died as the fool dieth. Boston has seen dark days, but never a moment so dark as that. Seven years before, Webster had said, in the famous words that Massachusetts binds as frontlets between her eyes, "There are Boston and Concord, and Lexington and Bunker Hill, and there they will remain forever." Had they already vanished? Was the spirit of the Revolution quite extinct? In the very cradle of liberty did no son survive to awake its slumbering echoes? By the grace of God, such a son there was. He had come with the multitude, and he had heard with sympathy and approval the speeches that condemned the wrong; but when the cruel voice justified the murderers of Lovejoy, the heart of the young man burned within him. This speech, he said to himself, must be answered. As the malign strain proceeded, the Boston boy, all on fire, with Concord and Lexington tugging at his heart, unconsciously murmured, "Such a speech in Faneuil Hall must be answered in Faneuil Hall." "Why not answer it your-



self?" whispered a neighbor who overheard him. "Help me to the platform and I will;"—and pushing and struggling through the dense and threatening crowd, the young man reached the platform, was lifted upon it, and, advancing to speak, was greeted with a roar of hostile cries. But riding the whirlwind undismayed, as for many a year afterwards he directed the same wild storm, he stood upon the platform in all the beauty and grace of imperial youth—the Greeks would have said a god descended—and, in words that touched the mind and heart and conscience of that vast multitude as with fire from heaven, recalling Boston to herself, he saved his native city and her cradle of liberty from the damning disgrace of stoning the first martyr in the great struggle for personal freedom. "Mr. Chairman," he said, "when I heard the gentleman lay down principles which placed the rioters, incendiaries, and murderers of Alton side by side with Otis and Hancock, and Quincy and Adams, I thought those pictured lips would have broken into voice to rebuke the recreant American, the slanderer of the dead." And even as he spoke the vision was fulfilled. Once more its native music rang through Faneuil Hall. In the orator's own burning words, those pictured lips did break into immortal rebuke. In Wendell Phillips, glowing with holy indignation at the insult to America and to man, John Adams and James Otis, Josiah Quincy and Samuel Adams, though dead, yet spake.

In the annals of American speech, there had been no such scene since Patrick Henry's electrical warning to George III. It was that greatest of oratorical triumphs,



when a supreme emotion, a sentiment which is to mould a people anew, lifted the orator to adequate expression. Three such scenes are illustrious in our history. That of the speech of Patrick Henry at Williamsburg, of Wendell Phillips in Faneuil Hall, of Abraham Lincoln in Gettysburg—three, and there is no fourth. They transmit, unextinguished, the torch of an eloquence which has aroused nations and changed the course of history, and which Webster called “noble, sublime, god-like action.” The tremendous controversy, indeed, inspired universal eloquence. As the cause passed from the moral appeal of the abolitionists to the political action of the Liberty party, of the Conscience Whigs and the Free-soil Democrats, and finally of the Republican party, the sound of speech, which in its variety and excellence had never been heard upon the continent, filled the air. But supreme over it all was the eloquence of Phillips, as, over the harmonious tumult of a vast orchestra, one clear voice, like a lark high poised in heaven, steadily carries the melody. As Demosthenes was the orator of Greece against Philip, and Cicero of Rome against Catiline, and John Pym of England against the Stuart despotism, Wendell Phillips was distinctively the orator, as others were the statesmen, of the antislavery cause.

When he first spoke at Faneuil Hall, some of the most renowned American orators were still in their prime. Webster and Clay were in the Senate, Choate at the bar, Edward Everett upon the academic platform. From all these orators Phillips differed more than they differed from each other. Behind Webster

and Everett and Clay there was always a great organized party, or an entrenched conservatism of feeling and opinion. They spoke accepted views. They moved with masses of men, and were sure of the applause of party spirit, of political tradition, and of established institutions. Phillips stood alone. He was not a Whig nor a Democrat, nor the graceful panegyrist of an undisputed situation. Both parties denounced him. He must recruit a new party. Public opinion condemned him. He must win public opinion to achieve his purpose. The tone, the method of the new orator, announced a new spirit. It was not an heroic story of the last century, nor the contention of contemporary politics; it was the unsuspected heroism of a mightier controversy that breathed and burned in his words. With no party behind him, and appealing against established order and acknowledged tradition, his speech was necessarily a popular appeal for a strange and unwelcome cause, and the condition of its success was that it should both charm and rouse the hearer, while, under cover of the fascination, the orator unfolded his argument and urged his plea. This condition the genius of the orator instinctively perceived, and it determined the character of his discourse.

He faced his audience with a tranquil mien, and a beaming aspect that was never dimmed. He spoke, and in the measured cadence of his quiet voice there was intense feeling, but no declamation, no passionate appeal, no superficial and feigned emotion. It was simple colloquy—a gentleman conversing. Unconsciously and surely the ear and heart were charmed. How was



it done? Ah! how did Mozart do it, how Raphael? The secret of the rose's sweetness, of the bird's ecstasy, of the sunset's glory—that is the secret of genius and of eloquence. What was heard, what was seen, was the form of noble manhood, the courteous and self-possessed tone, the flow of modulated speech, sparkling with matchless richness of illustration, with apt allusion and happy anecdote and historic parallel, with wit and pitiless invective, with melodious pathos, with stinging satire, with crackling epigram and limpid humor, like the bright ripples that play around the sure and steady prow of the resistless ship. Like an illuminated vase of odors, he glowed with concentrated and perfumed fire. The divine energy of his conviction utterly possessed him, and his

"pure and eloquent blood  
Spoke in his cheek, and so distinctly wrought  
That one might almost say his body thought."

Was it Pericles swaying the Athenian multitude? Was it Apollo breathing the music of the morning from his lips? It was an American patriot, a modern Son of Liberty, with a soul as firm and as true as was ever consecrated to unselfish duty, pleading with the American conscience for the chained and speechless victims of American inhumanity.

How terribly earnest was the antislavery contest this generation little knows. But, to understand Phillips we must recall the situation of the country. When he joined the abolitionists, and for more than twenty years afterwards, slavery sat supreme in the White House, and made laws in the Capitol. Courts of jus-



tice were its ministers and legislatures its lackeys. It silenced the preacher in the pulpit, it muzzled the editor at his desk, and the professor in his lecture-room. It set a price upon the head of peaceful citizens, robbed the mails, and denounced the vital principle of the Declaration of Independence as treason. In States whose laws did not tolerate slavery, slavery ruled the club and the drawing-room, the factory and the office, swaggered at the dinner-table and scourged with scorn a cowardly society. It tore the Golden Rule from school-books, and from the prayer-book the pictured benignity of Christ. It prohibited in the free States schools for the hated race, and hunted women who taught children to read. It forbade a free people to communicate with their representatives, seized territory to extend its area and confirm its sovereignty, and plotted to steal more to make its empire impregnable, and the free republic of the United States impossible. Scholars, divines, men and women in every church, in every party, raised individual voices in earnest protest. They sighed against a hurricane. There had been such protest in the country for two centuries—colonial provisions and restrictions—the fiery voice of Whitfield in the South, the calm persuasion of Woolman in the middle colonies, the heroism of Hopkins in Rhode Island, the eloquence of Rush in Pennsylvania. There had been emancipation societies at the North and at the South—arguments and appeals and threats in the Congress of the Confederation, in the Constitutional Convention, in the Congress of the Union. There had been the words and the will of Washington, the warning of Jef-

feron, the consenting testimony of the revered fathers of the government,—always the national conscience somewhere silently pleading, always the finger of the world steadily pointing in scorn. But here, after all the protest and the rebuke and the endeavor, was the malign power which, when the Constitution was formed, had been but the shrinking Afreet bound in the casket—now towering and resistless. He had kicked his casket into the sea, and, haughtily defying the conscience of the country and the moral sentiment of mankind, demanded absolute control of the republic as the price of union—the republic, anxious only to submit and to call submission statesmanship.

If, then, the work of the Revolution was to be saved, and independent America was to become free America, the first and paramount necessity was to arouse the country. Agitation was the duty of the hour. Garrison was certainly not the first abolitionist; no, nor was Luther the first Protestant. But Luther brought all the wandering and separate rays of protest to a focus, and kindled the contest for religious freedom. So, when Garrison flung full in the face of slavery the defiance of immediate and complete abolition, slavery, instinctively foreseeing its doom, sprang to its feet, and joined, with the heroism of despair, in the death-grapple with liberty, from which, after a generation, liberty arose unbruised and victorious. It is hard for the survivors of a generation, to which abolitionist was a word suggesting the most odious fanaticism, a furious declamation at once nonsensical and dangerous, a grotesque and sanctimonious playing with fire in a powder-maga-



zine, to believe that the names of the two representative abolitionists will be written with a sunbeam, as Phillips says of Toussaint, high over many an honored name. But history, looking before and after, readjusts contemporary judgments of men and events. In all the essential qualities of heroic action, Luther nailing his challenge to the Church, upon the Church's own door, when the Church was supreme in Europe—William Tell, in the romantic legend, serenely scorning to bow to the cap of Gessler, when Gessler's troops held all the market-place, are not nobler figures than Garrison and Phillips, in the hour of the complete possession of the country by the power of slavery, demanding immediate and unconditional emancipation. A tone of apology, of deprecation or regret, no more becomes an American in speaking of the abolitionists than in speaking of the Sons of Liberty in the Revolution; and every tribute of honor and respect which we gladly pay to the illustrious fathers of American Independence is paid as worthily to their sons, the pioneers of American freedom.

That freedom was secured, indeed, by the union of many forces. The abolition movement was moral agitation. It was a voice crying in the wilderness. As an American movement it was reproached for holding aloof from the American political method. But in the order of time the moral awakening precedes political action. Politics are founded in compromise and expediency, and had the abolition leaders paused to parley with prejudice and interest and personal ambition, in order to smooth and conciliate and persuade, their



duty would have been undone. When the alarm-bell at night has brought the aroused citizens to the street, they will organize their action. But the ringer of the bell betrays his trust when he ceases to startle. To vote was to acknowledge the Constitution. To acknowledge the Constitution was to offer a premium upon slavery by granting more political power for every slave. It was to own an obligation to return innocent men to unspeakable degradation, and to shoot them down if, with a thousandfold greater reason than our fathers, they resisted oppression. Could Americans do this? Could honest men do this? Could a great country do this and not learn, sooner or later, by ghastly experience, the truth which George Mason proclaimed—that Providence punishes national sins by national calamities? “The Union,” said Wendell Phillips, with a calmness that enchanted while it appalled, “the Union is called the very ark of the American covenant; but has not idolatry of the Union been the chief bulwark of slavery, and in the words and deeds and spirit of the most vehement ‘Union saviors’ who denounce agitation can any hope of emancipation be descried? If, then, under the sacred charter of the Union, slavery has grown to this stupendous height, throwing the shadow of death over the land, is not the Union as it exists the foe of liberty, and can we honestly affirm that it is the sole surviving hope of freedom in the world? Long ago the great leaders of our parties hushed their voices, and whispered that even to speak of slavery was to endanger the Union. Is not this enough? Sons of Otis and of Adams, of Franklin and

of Jay, are we ready for union upon the ruins of freedom? *Delenda Carthago! Delenda Carthago!*"

Even while he spoke there sprang up around him the marshalled host of an organized political party, which, raising the Constitution as a banner of freedom, marched to the polls to make the Union the citadel of liberty. He, indeed, had rejected the Constitution and the Union as the bulwark of slavery. But he and the political host, widely differing, had yet a common purpose, and were confounded in a common condemnation. And who shall count the voters in that political army, and who the generous heroes of the actual war, in whose young hearts his relentless denunciation of the Union had bred the high resolve that, under the protection of the Constitution and by its own lawful power, the slave Union which he denounced should be dissolved in the fervid glory of a new Union of freedom? His plea, indeed, did not persuade his friends, and was furiously spurned by his foes. Hang Phillips and Yancey together, hang the abolitionist and the fire-eater, and we shall have peace, cried mingled wrath and terror, as the absorbing debate deepened towards civil war. But still, through the startling flash and over the thunder peal with which the tempest burst, that cry rang out undismayed, *Delenda Carthago!* The awful storm has rolled away. The warning voice is stilled forever. But the slave Union whose destruction he sought is dissolved, and the glorious Union of freedom and equal rights, which his soul desired, is the blessed Union of to-day.

It is an idle speculation, fellow-citizens, to what or to



whom chiefly belonged the glory of emancipation. It is like the earlier questions of the Revolution: Who first proposed the Committee on Correspondence? Who first hinted resistance? Who first spoke of possible independence? It is enough that there was a noble emulation of generous patriotism, and happy history forbears to decide. Doubtless, the minute-men fired the first organized shot of the Revolution. But it was Paul Revere riding alone at midnight and arousing Middlesex, one hundred and nine years ago to-night, that brought the farmers to stand embattled on Lexington Green and Concord Bridge.

For his great work of arousing the country and piercing the national conscience, Phillips was especially fitted, not only by the commanding will and genius of the orator, but by the profound sincerity of his faith in the people. The party leaders of his time had a qualified faith in the people. His was unqualified. To many of his fellow-citizens it seemed mad, quixotic, whimsical, or merely feigned. To some of them even now he appears to have been only an eloquent demagogue. But his life is the reply. To no act of his, to no private advantage sought or gained, to no use of his masterly power, except to promote purposes which he believed to be essential to the public welfare, could they ever point who charged him with base motives or personal ends. No man, indeed, can take a chief part in tumultuous national controversy without encountering misjudgment and reproach and unmeasured condemnation. But it does not affect the lofty patriotism of the American Revolution that Adam Smith believed



it to be stimulated by the vanity of colonial shopkeepers. It does not dim the lustre of the Methodist revival of religious sentiment in England that the bishops branded it as a vulgar and ignorant enthusiasm. Wendell Phillips held with John Bright, that the first five hundred men who passed in the Strand would make as good a Parliament as that which sits at St. Stephens. A student of history and a close observer of men, he rejected that fear of the multitude which springs from the feeling that the many are ignorant while the few are wise; and he believed the saying, too profound for Talleyrand, to whom it is ascribed, that everybody knows more than anybody. The great argument for popular government is not the essential righteousness of a majority, but the celestial law which subordinates the brute force of numbers to intellectual and moral ascendancy, as the immeasurable floods of ocean follow the moon. Undisturbed by the most rancorous hostility, as in the meetings at the Music Hall in this city in the winter of secession, he looked calmly at the mob, and behind the drunken Philip he saw Philip the king.

The huge wrongs and crimes in the annals of the race, the wars that have wasted the world and desolated mankind, he knew to be the work of the crowned and ruling minority, not of the mass of the people. The companion of his boyhood and his college classmate, Motley, with generous sympathy and vivid touch, that gave new beauty to the old heroic story, had shown that not from the palace of Charles V., not from luxurious Versailles, but from the huts of Dutch islanders scattered along the hard coast of the North

Sea, came the genius of liberty to rescue modern Europe from hopeless despotism. Nay, with his own eyes, saddened and surprised, Phillips saw that, in the immediate presence of a monstrous and perilous wrong to human nature, prosperous and comfortable America angrily refused to hear; and that, while humanity lay bruised and bleeding by the way, the polished society of the most enlightened city in the Union passed by disdainful on the other side.

But, while he cherished this profound faith in the people, and because he cherished it, he never flattered the mob, nor hung upon its neck, nor pandered to its passion, nor suffered its foaming hate or its exulting enthusiasm to touch the calm poise of his regnant soul. Those who were eager to insult and deride and silence him, when he pleaded for the negro, wept and shouted and rapturously crowned him, when he paid homage to O'Connell, and made O'Connell's cause his own. But the crowd did not follow him with huzzas. He moved in solitary majesty, and if from his smooth speech a lightning flash of satire or of scorn struck a cherished lie, or an honored character, or a dogma of the party creed, and the crowd burst into a furious tempest of dissent, he beat it into silence with uncompromising iteration. If it tried to drown his voice, he turned to the reporters, and over the raging tumult calmly said, "Howl on, I speak to thirty millions here."

There was another power in his speech sharper than in the speech of any other American orator, an unsparing invective. The abolition appeal was essentially iconoclastic, and the method of a reformer at close



quarters with a mighty system of wrong cannot be measured by the standards of cool and polite debate. Phillips did not shrink from the sternest denunciation or ridicule or scorn of those who seemed to him recreant to freedom and humanity, however enshrined they might be in public admiration, with whatever official dignity invested, with whatever softer graces of accomplishment endowed. The idols of a purely conventional virtue he delighted to shatter, because no public enemy seemed to him more deadly than the American who made moral cowardice respectable. He felt that the complacent conformity of Northern communities was the strength of slavery, and the man who would return a fugitive slave, or with all the resources of sophistry defend his return, upon a plea of constitutional obligation, was, in his view, a man who would do an act of cruel wickedness to-day to avoid a vague and possible mischance hereafter. If the plea were sound in the case of one man, if one innocent man was to be an outcast from protecting laws, from effective sympathy, and from humanity, because he had been unspeakably wronged, then it was as sound in the case of every such man, and the Union and the Constitution rested upon three million crimes. Was this endurable? Should an offence so inhuman as deliberate obedience to laws which compelled a man to do to another what he would not hesitate, amid the applause of all men, to kill that other for attempting to do to him — should such an offence be condoned by courteous admonition and hesitating doubt? Should the partiality of friendship, should the learning, renown, or public service of



the offender, save him from the pillory of public scorn? If Patrick Henry made the country ring with the name of the dishonest contractor in the war, should the name of the educated American who conspires with the slaveholders against the slave be too sacred for obloquy? No epithet is too blistering for John Brown, who takes his life in his hand that he may break the chain of the slave. Shall the gentleman whose compliance weakens the moral fibre of New England, and fastens the slave's chain more hopelessly, go unwhipped of a single word of personal rebuke? Such questions he did not ask, but they ask themselves, as to-day we turn the pages that still quiver with his blasting words, and recall the mortal strife in which he stood. Doubtless his friends, who knew that well-spring of sweet waters, his heart, and who, like him, were sealed to the service of emancipation, sometimes grieved and recoiled amazed from his terrible arraignment. He knew the penalty of his course. He paid it cheerfully. But history will record that the orator who, in that supreme exigency of liberty, pitilessly whipped by name the aiders and abettors of the crime against humanity, made such complicity in every intelligent community infinitely more arduous, and so served mankind, public virtue, and the State.

But more than this. The avowed and open opponents of the antislavery agitation could not justly complain of his relentless pursuit. From them he received the blows that in turn he did not spare. But others, his friends, soldiers of the same army, although in other divisions and upon a different route, marching

against the same foe, did they, too, feel those shafts of fire? How many a Massachusetts man, whose name the commonwealth will canonize with his, loyal with his own fidelity to the common cause, he sometimes taunted as recreant and scourged as laggard! How many leaders in other States, statesmen beloved and revered, who in other ways than his fought the battle of liberty with firmness in the right, as God gave them to see the right, and who live in national gratitude and among the great in history forevermore, did not those dauntless lips seem sometimes cruelly to malign! "Blame not this plainness of speech," he said; "I have a hundred friends, as brave souls as God ever made, whose hearths are not as safe after honored men make such speeches." He knew that his ruthless words closed to him homes of friendship and hearts of sympathy. He saw the amazement, he heard the condemnation; but, like the great apostle preaching Christ, he knew only humanity, and humanity crucified. Tongue of the dumb, eyes of the blind, feet of the impotent, his voice alone, among the voices that were everywhere heard and heeded, was sent by God to challenge every word or look or deed that seemed to him possibly to palliate oppression or to comfort the oppressor. Divinely commissioned he was not, indeed, to do injustice; but the human heart is very patient with the hero who, in his strenuous and sublime conflict, if sometimes he does not clearly see and sometimes harshly judges, yet, in all his unsparing assault, deals never a blow of malice, nor of envy, nor of personal gratification—the warrior who grasps at



no prizes for which others strive, and whose unselfish peace no laurels of Miltiades disturb.

For a quarter of a century this was the career of Wendell Phillips. His life had no events; his speeches were its only incident. No public man could pass from us whose death, like his, would command universal attention, whose story would not display a splendid list of special achievements, of various official service, as of treaties skilfully negotiated, of legislative measures wisely adjusted, of imposing professional triumphs, of devoted party following, of an immense personal association, such as our ordinary political controversy and the leadership of genius and eloquence produce. But that official participation in political action, and that peculiar personal contact with society, were wanting in the life of Wendell Phillips. How strong, indeed, his moral ascendancy over the public mind, how warm the admiration, how fond the affection in which, at a little distance, and as became the supreme reserve of his nature, he was held, let this scene, like that of his burial, bear witness. But during the long crusade of his life he was the most solitary of eminent American figures. In the general course of affairs he took little part. He had no share in the conduct of the associations for every purpose, scientific, literary, charitable, moral, or other, with which every American community abounds. In ordinary society, at the club and the public dinner, at the assembly and upon the ceremonial occasion, he was as unknown as in legislative halls or in public offices. Partly it was that reserve, partly that method of his public



speech, withheld him ; partly he felt the air of social complaisance, like the compromising atmosphere of legislatures, to be unfriendly to the spirit and objects of his life, and partly his liberal hand preferred to give where there could be no return. Yet, in the political arena, had he cared to engage, no man was more amply equipped than he, by natural powers and taste and adaptation, by special study and familiarity with history and literature, by exquisite tact and gay humor and abounding affability, by all the qualities that in public life make a great party leader, a leader honored and beloved. And in that other circle, that "elevated sphere" in which Marie Antoinette appeared, "glittering like the morning star, full of life and splendor and joy," that decorated world of social refinement into which he was born, there would have been no more fascinating or courtly figure, could he have forborne the call of conscience, the duty of his life.

When the war ended, and the specific purpose of his relentless agitation was accomplished, Phillips was still in the prime of life. Had his mind recurred to the dreams of earlier years ; had he desired, in the fulness of his fame and the maturity of his powers, to turn to the political career which the hopes of the friends of his youth had forecast, I do not doubt that the Massachusetts of Sumner and of Andrew, proud of his genius and owning his immense service to the triumphant cause, although a service beyond the party line, and often apparently directed against the party itself, would have gladly summoned him to duty. It would, indeed, have been a kind of peerage for this

great commoner. But not to repose and peaceful honors did his earnest soul incline. "Now that the field is won," he said gayly to a friend, "do you sit by the camp-fire, but I will put out into the underbrush." The slave, indeed, was free, but emancipation did not free the agitator from his task. The client that suddenly appeared before him on that memorable October day was not an oppressed race alone: it was wronged humanity; it was the victim of unjust systems and unequal laws; it was the poor man, the weak man, the unfortunate man, whoever and wherever he might be. This was the cause that he would still plead in the forum of public opinion. "Let it not be said," he wrote to a meeting of his old abolition comrades, two months before his death, "that the old abolitionist stopped with the negro, and was never able to see that the same principles claimed his utmost effort to protect all labor, white and black, and to further the discussion of every claim of humanity."

Was this the habit of mere agitation, the restless discontent that follows great achievement? There were those who thought so. But they were critics of a temperament which did not note that with Phillips's agitation was a principle, and a deliberately chosen method to definite ends. There were still vast questions springing from the same root of selfishness and injustice as the question of slavery. They must force a hearing in the same way. He would not adopt in middle life the career of politics, which he had renounced in youth, however seductive that career might be, whatever its opportunities and rewards, because the pur-



pose had grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength to form public opinion, rather than to represent it in making or in executing the laws. To form public opinion upon vital public questions by public discussion, but by public discussion absolutely fearless and sincere, and conducted with honest faith in the people to whom the argument was addressed—this was the chosen task of his life; this was the public service which he had long performed, and this he would still perform, and in the familiar way.

His comprehensive philanthropy had made him, even during the antislavery contest, the untiring advocate of other great reforms. His powerful presentation of the justice and reason of the political equality of women, at Worcester in 1857, more than any other single impulse, launched that question upon the sea of popular controversy. In the general statement of principle, nothing has been added to that discourse; in vivid and effective eloquence of advocacy it has never been surpassed. All the arguments for independence echoed that of John Adams in the continental Congress. All the pleas for applying the American principle of representation to the wives and mothers of American citizens echo the eloquence of Wendell Phillips at Worcester. His, also, was the voice that summoned the temperance voters of the commonwealth to stand up and be counted; the voice which resolutely and definitely exposed the crime to which the busy American mind and conscience are at last turning, the American crime against the Indians. Through him the sorrow of Crete, the tragedy of Ireland, pleaded with America.



In the terrible experience of the early antislavery debate, when the Church and refined society seemed to be the rampart of slavery, he had learned profound distrust of that conservatism of prosperity which chills human sympathy and narrows the conscience. So the vast combinations of capital in these later days, with their immense monopolies and imperial power, seemed to him sure to corrupt the government, and to obstruct and threaten the real welfare of the people. He felt, therefore, that what is called the respectable class is often really, but unconsciously and with a generous purpose, not justly estimating its own tendency, the dangerous class. He was not a party politician; he cared little for parties or for party leaders. But any political party which, in his judgment, represented the dangerous tendency, was a party to be defeated in the interest of the peace and progress of all the people.

But his judgment, always profoundly sincere, was it not sometimes profoundly mistaken? No nobler friend of freedom and of man than Wendell Phillips ever breathed upon this continent, and no man's service to freedom surpasses his. But before the war he demanded peaceful disunion—yet it was the Union in arms that saved liberty. During the war he would have superseded Lincoln—but it was Lincoln who freed the slaves. He pleaded for Ireland, tortured by centuries of misrule; and while every generous heart followed with sympathy the pathos and the power of his appeal, the just mind recoiled from the sharp arraignment of the truest friends in England that Ireland ever

had. I know it all; but I know also, and history will remember, that the slave Union which he denounced is dissolved; that it was the heart and conscience of the nation, exalted by his moral appeal of agitation, as well as by the enthusiasm of patriotic war, which held up the hands of Lincoln, and upon which Lincoln leaned in emancipating the slaves; and that only by indignant and aggressive appeals like his has the heart of England ever opened to Irish wrong.

No man, I say, can take a pre-eminent and effective part in contentions that shake nations, or in the discussion of great national policies of foreign relations, of domestic economy and finance, without keen reproach and fierce misconception. "But death," says Bacon, "bringeth good fame." Then, if moral integrity remain unsoiled, the purpose pure, blameless the life, and patriotism as shining as the sun, conflicting views and differing counsels disappear, and, firmly fixed upon character and actual achievement, good fame rests secure. Eighty years ago, in this city, how unsparing was the denunciation of John Adams for betraying and ruining his party, for his dogmatism, his vanity and ambition, for his exasperating impracticability—he, the Colossus of the Revolution! And Thomas Jefferson!—I may truly say, what the historian says of the Saracen mothers and Richard Cœur de Lion, that the mothers of Boston hushed their children with fear of the political devil incarnate of Virginia. But, when the drapery of mourning shrouded the columns and overhung the arches of Faneuil Hall, Daniel Webster did not remember that sometimes John Adams was



imprudent, and Thomas Jefferson sometimes unwise. He remembered only that John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were two of the greatest of American patriots—and their fellow-citizens of every party bowed their heads and said amen. I am not here to declare that the judgment of Wendell Phillips was always sound, nor his estimate of men always just, nor his policy always approved by the event. He would have scorned such praise. I am not here to eulogize the mortal, but the immortal. He, too, was a great American patriot; and no American life—no, not one—offers to future generations of his countrymen a more priceless example of inflexible fidelity to conscience and to public duty; and no American more truly than he purged the national name of its shame, and made the American flag the flag of hope for mankind.

Among her noblest children his native city will cherish him, and gratefully recall the unbending Puritan soul that dwelt in a form so gracious and urbane. The plain house in which he lived—severely plain, because the welfare of the suffering and the slave were preferred to book, and picture, and every fair device of art—the house to which the north star led the trembling fugitive, and which the unfortunate and the friendless knew; the radiant figure passing swiftly through these streets, plain as the house from which it came, regal with a royalty beyond that of kings; the ceaseless charity untold; the strong sustaining heart of private friendship; the sacred domestic affection that must not here be named; the eloquence which, like the song of Orpheus, will fade from living memory into a doubt-

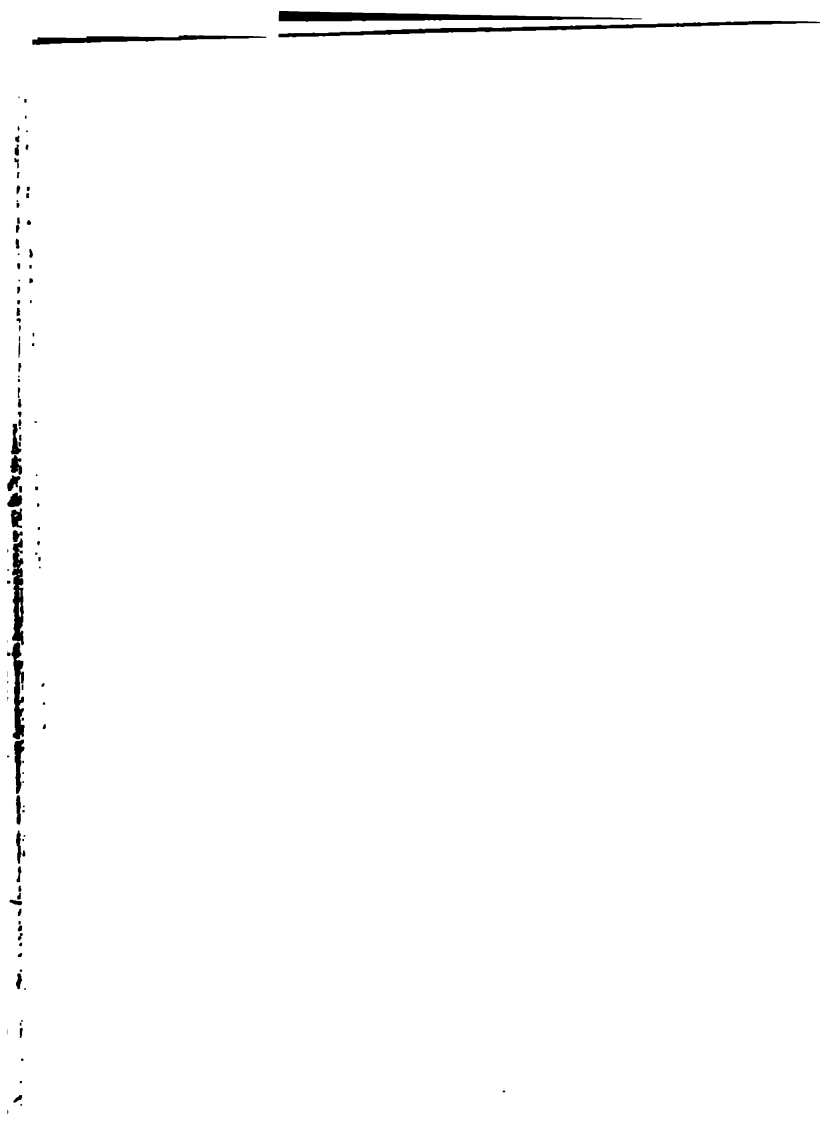


ful tale ; that great scene of his youth in Faneuil Hall ; the surrender of ambition ; the mighty agitation and the mighty triumph with which his name is forever blended ; the consecration of a life hidden with God in sympathy with man,—these, all these, will live among your immortal traditions, heroic even in your heroic story. But not yours alone. As years go by, and only the large outlines of lofty American characters and careers remain, the wide republic will confess the benediction of a life like this, and gladly own that if, with perfect faith and hope assured, America would still stand and “bid the distant generations hail,” the inspiration of her national life must be the sublime moral courage, the all-embracing humanity, the spotless integrity, the absolutely unselfish devotion of great powers to great public ends, which were the glory of Wendell Phillips.

XII

ROBERT BURNS

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE UNVEILING OF THE STATUE  
OF THE POET, IN CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK,  
OCTOBER 2, 1880





## ROBERT BURNS

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THE year 1759 was a proud year for Great Britain. Two years before, amid universal disaster, Lord Chesterfield had exclaimed, "We are no longer a nation." But, meanwhile, Lord Chatham had restored to his country the sceptre of the seas and covered her name with the glory of continuous victory. The year 1759 saw his greatest triumphs. It was the year of Minden, where the French army was routed; of Quiberon, where the French fleet was destroyed; of the Heights of Abraham, in Canada, where Wolfe died happy, and the dream of French supremacy upon the American continent vanished forever. The triumphant thunder of British guns was heard all around the world. Robert Clive was founding British dominion in India; Boscawen and his fellow-admirals were sweeping France from the ocean; and, in America, Colonel George Washington had planted the British flag on the field of Braddock's defeat. "We are forced to ask every morning what victory there is," said Horace Walpole, "for fear of missing one."

But not only in politics and war was the genius of Great Britain illustrious. James Watt was testing the

force of steam; Hargreaves was inventing the spinning-jenny, which ten years later Arkwright would complete; and Wedgwood was making household ware beautiful. Fielding's "Tom Jones" had been ten years in print, and Gray's "Elegy" nine years. Dr. Johnson had lately published his dictionary, and Edmund Burke his essay on the Sublime and Beautiful. In the year 1759, Garrick was the first of actors, and Sir Joshua Reynolds of painters. Gibbon dated in this year the preface of his first work; Hume published the third and fourth volumes of his history of England; Robertson his history of Scotland; and Sterne came to London to find a publisher for "Tristram Shandy." Oliver Goldsmith, "unfriended, solitary," was toiling for the booksellers in his garret over Fleet Ditch; but four years later, with Burke and Reynolds and Garrick and Johnson, he would found the most famous of literary clubs, and sell the "Vicar of Wakefield" to save himself from jail. It was a year of events decisive of the course of history, and of men whose fame is an illustrious national possession. But among those events none is more memorable than the birth of a son in the poorest of Scotch homes; and of all that renowned and resplendent throng of statesmen, soldiers, and seamen, of philosophers, poets, and inventors, whose fame filled the world with acclamation, not one is more gratefully and fondly remembered than the Ayrshire ploughman, Robert Burns.

This great assembly is in large part composed of his countrymen. Most of you, fellow-citizens, were born in Scotland. There is no more beautiful country, and, as

you stand here, memory and imagination recall your native land. Misty coasts and far-stretching splendors of summer sea; solemn mountains and wind-swept moors; singing streams and rocky glens and waterfalls; lovely vales of Ayr and Yarrow, of Teviot and the Tweed; crumbling ruins of ancient days, abbey and castle and tower; legends of romance gilding burn and brae with "the light that never was on sea or land;" every hill with its heroic tradition, every stream with its story, every valley with its song; land of the harebell and the mountain-daisy, land of the laverock and the curlew, land of braw youths and sonsie lasses, of a deep, strong, melancholy manhood, of a deep, true, tender womanhood—this is your Scotland, this is your native land. And how could you so truly transport it to the home of your adoption, how interpret it to us beyond the sea, so fully and so fitly, as by this memorial of the poet whose song is Scotland? No wonder that you proudly bring his statue and place it here under the American sun, in the chief American city, side by side with that of the other great Scotchman whose genius and fame, like the air and the sunshine, no local boundary can confine. In this Walhalla of our various nationality, it will be long before two fellow-countrymen are commemorated whose genius is at once so characteristically national and so broadly universal, who speak so truly for their own countrymen and for all mankind, as Walter Scott and Robert Burns.

This season of the reddening leaf, of sunny stillness and of roaring storm, especially befits this commemoration, because it was at this season that the poet was



peculiarly inspired, and because the wild and tender, the wayward and golden-hearted autumn is the best symbol of his genius. The sculptor has imagined him in some hour of pensive and ennobling meditation, when his soul, amid the hush of evening, in the falling year, was exalted to an ecstasy of passionate yearning and regret; and here, rapt into silence, just as the heavenly melody is murmuring from his lips, here he sits and will sit forever. It was in October that Highland Mary died. It was in October that the hymn to Mary in heaven was written. It was in October, ever afterwards, that Burns was lost in melancholy musing as the anniversary of her death drew near. Yet within a few days, while his soul might seem to have been still lifted in that sorrowful prayer, he wrote the most rollicking, resistless, and immortal of drinking-songs:

“Oh, Willie brew'd a peck o' maut,  
And Rob and Allan cam to pree.  
Three blither hearts that lee lang night  
Ye wadna find in Christendie.”

Here were the two strains of this marvellous genius, and the voices of the two spirits that went with him through life:

“He raised a mortal to the skies,  
She drew an angel down.”

This was Burns. This was the blended poet and man. What sweetness and grace! What soft, pathetic, penetrating melody, as if all the sadness of shaggy Scotland had found a voice! What whispering witchery of love! What boisterous, jovial humor, excessive, daring, unbri-

dled!—satire of the kirk so scorching and scornful that John Knox might have burst indignant from his grave, and shuddering ghosts of Covenanters have filled the mountains with a melancholy wail. A genius so masterful, a charm so universal, that it drew farmers from the field when his coming was known, and men from their tavern beds at midnight to listen delighted until dawn.

It cannot be said of Burns that he “burst his birth's invidious bar.” He was born poor, he lived poor, he died poor, and he always felt his poverty to be a curse. He was fully conscious of himself and of his intellectual superiority. He disdained and resented the condescension of the great, and he defiantly asserted his independence. I do not say that he might not or ought not to have lived tranquilly and happily as a poor man. Perhaps, as Carlyle suggests, he should have divided his hours between poetry and virtuous industry. We only know that he did not. Like an untamable eagle he dashed against the bars he could not break, and his life was a restless, stormy alternation of low and lofty moods, of pure and exalted feeling, of mad revel and impotent regret. His pious mother crooned over his cradle snatches of old ballads and legends, of which her mind was full. His father, silent, austere, inflexibly honest, taught him to read good books, books whose presence in his poor cottage helps to explain the sturdy mental vigor of the Scotch peasantry. But the ballads charmed the boy. He could not turn a tune, but, driving the cart or ploughing or digging in the field, he was still saying the verses over and over, his heart answering



like a shell the sea, until, when he was fifteen, he composed a song himself upon a lassie who drew his eye and heart; and so, as he says, love and poetry began with him together.

For ten years his life was a tale of fermenting youth: toiling and moiling, turning this way and that, to surveying and flax-dressing, in the vain hope of finding a fairer chance; a lover of all the girls, and the master of the revels everywhere; brightening the long day of peat-cutting with the rattling fire of wit that his comrades never forgot; writing love-songs, and fascinated by the wild smuggler-boys of Kirkoswald; led by them into bitter shame and self-reproach, but turning with all the truculence of heady youth upon his moral censors, and taunting them with immortal ridicule. At twenty-five, when his father was already laid in Alloway kirkyard, the seed of old national legend which his mother had dropped into his cradle began to shoot into patriotic feeling and verse, and Burns became conscious of distinct poetic ambition. For two years he followed the plough and wrote some of his noblest poems. But the farm which he tilled with his brother was unproductive, and at the very time that his genius was most affluent his conduct was most wayward. Distracted by poetry and poverty and passion, and brought to public shame, he determined to leave the country, and in 1786, when he was twenty-seven years old, Burns published his poems by subscription, to get the money to pay his passage to America. Ah! could that poor, desperate ploughman of Mossgiel have foreseen this day, could he have known that because of those poems—an abid-



ing part of literature, familiar to every people, sung and repeated in American homes from sea to sea—his genius would be honored and his name blessed, and his statue raised with grateful pride to keep his memory in America green forever, perhaps the amazing vision might have nerved him to make his life as noble as his genius; perhaps the full sunshine of assured glory might have wrought upon that great, generous, wilful soul to

“tak' a thought an' men'.”

Burns's sudden fame stayed him and brought him to Edinburgh and its brilliant literary society. Hume was gone, but Adam Smith remained; Robertson was there, and Dugald Stewart. There, also, were Blacklock and Hugh Blair and Archibald Alison; Fraser Tytler and Adam Ferguson and Henry Erskine. There, too, were the beautiful Duchess of Gordon and the truly noble Lord Glencairn. They welcomed Burns as a prodigy, but he would not be patronized. Glad of his fame, but proudly and aggressively independent, he wanders through the stately city, taking off his hat before the house of Allan Ramsay, and reverently kissing Robert Ferguson's grave—“his elder brother in misfortune,” as Burns called him. He goes to the great houses, and, although they did not know it, he was the greatest guest they had ever entertained, the greatest poet that then or ever walked the streets of Edinburgh. His famous hosts were all Scotchmen, but he was the only Scotchman among them who had written in the dialect of his country, and who had become famous without ceasing to be Scotch. But one day there stole

into the drawing-room where Burns stood a boy of fifteen, who was presently to eclipse all Scottish fame but that of Burns himself. The poet was looking at an engraving of a soldier lying frozen in the snow, under which were some touching lines, and, as he read them, Burns, with his eyes full of tears, asked who wrote them. None of the distinguished company could tell him, but the young boy, Walter Scott, timidly whispered the name of the author, and he never forgot that Burns turned upon him his full, dark, tearful eyes—eyes which Scott called the most glorious imaginable—and thanked him. Scott saw Burns no more. They parted in Scotland a hundred years ago; but here, now, under this tender American sky, they meet again, face to face, amid the grateful benedictions of two worlds.

The dazzling Edinburgh days were a glaring social contrast to the rest of his life. The brilliant society flattered him, but his brilliancy outshone its own. He was wiser than the learned, wittier than the gayest, and more courteous than the courtliest. His genius flashed and blazed like a torch among the tapers, and the well-ordered company, enthralled by the surprising guest, winced and wondered. If the host was condescending, the guest was never obsequious. But Burns did not love a lord, and he chafed indignantly at the subtle but invincible lines of social distinction, feeling too surely that the realm of leisure and ease, a sphere in which he knew himself to be naturally master, must always float beyond, beyond—the alluring glimmer of a mirage. A thousand times wistfully watching this fascinating human figure amid the sharp vicissitudes of his life, from



Poosie Nansie's ale-house in Mauchline to the stately drawing-room of Gordon Castle, with all his royal manhood and magnificent capability entangled and confused, the heart longs, but longs in vain, to hear the one exulting and triumphant cry of the strong man coming to himself, "I will arise."

But with all his gifts that was not given him. Burns left Edinburgh to wander about his bonnie Scotland, his mind full of its historic tradition and legendary lore, and beginning to overflow with songs born of the national melodies. He was to see, and he wished to see, no other land. His heart beat towards it with affectionate fidelity, as if he felt that somehow its destiny were reflected in his own. At Coldstream, where the Tweed divides Scotland from England, he went across the river, but as he touched the English soil he turned, fell upon his knees, stretched out his arms to Scotland, and prayed God to bless his native land.

His wanderings ended, Burns settled, at twenty-nine, upon the pleasant farm of Ellisland, in Nithsdale, over the hills from his native Ayrshire,

"To make a happy fireside clime  
For weans and wife."

Here his life began happily. He managed the farm, started a parish library, went to church, and was proud of the regard of his neighbors. He was honored and sought by travellers, and his genius was in perfect tune. "Tam O'Shanter," and "Bonnie Doon," the songs of Highland Mary, "John Anderson, my Jo," and "Auld Lang Syne," are all flowers of Ellisland. But he could



not be farmer, gauger, poet, and prince of good-fellows all at once. The cloud darkened that was never to be lifted. The pleasant farm at Ellisland failed, and Burns, selling all his stock and crop and tools, withdrew to Dumfries. It was the last change of his life, and melancholy were the days that followed, but radiant with the keen flashes and tender gleams of the highest poetic genius of the time. Writing exquisite songs, often lost in the unworthiest companionship, consumed with self-reproach, but regular in his official duties; teaching his boy to love the great English poets, from Shakespeare to Gray; seeking pleasure at any cost, conscious of a pity and a censure at which he could not wonder, but conscious also of the inexpressible tragedy which pity and censure could not know nor comprehend, and, through evil report and good report, the same commanding and noble nature that we know, Burns in these last dark days of Dumfries is like a stately ship in a tempest, with all her canvas spread, with far-flying streamers and glancing lights and music penetrating the storm, drifting helpless on the cruel rocks of a lee shore. One summer evening towards the end, as a young man rode into Dumfries to attend a ball, he saw Burns loitering alone on one side of the street, while the other was thronged with gay gentlemen and ladies, not one of whom cared to greet the poet. The young man instantly dismounted, and, joining Burns, asked him to cross the street. "Nay, nay, my young friend, that's all over now;" and then, in a low, soft, mournful voice, Burns repeated the old ballad:

"His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,  
His auld ane looked better than mony ane's new;  
But now he lets 't wear ony way it will hing,  
And casts himsell dowie upon the corn bing.

"Oh, were we young as we ance hae been,  
We suld hae been galloping down on yon green,  
And linking it owre the lily-white lea,  
And werena my heart light it wad dee."

Five years of letting his life wear ony way it would hing, and Burns's life was ended, in 1796, in his thirty-seventh year. There was an outburst of universal sorrow. A great multitude crowded the little town at his burial. Memorials, monuments, biographies of every kind followed. Poets ever since have sung of him as of no other poet. The theme is always fresh and always captivating, and, within the year, our own American poet, beloved and honored in his beautiful and unwasted age, sings of Burns as he sees him in vision, as the world shall forever see him, an immortal youth cheerily singing at his toil in the bright spring morning.

The personal feeling of Longfellow's poem is that which Burns always inspires. There is no great poet who is less of a mere name and abstraction. His grasp is so human that the heart insists upon knowing the story of his life, and ponders it with endless sympathy and wonder. It is not necessary to excuse or conceal. The key of Burns's life is the struggle of a shrinking will tossed between great extremes—between poetic genius and sensibility, intellectual force, tenderness, conscience, and generous sympathies on one side, and tremendous passions upon the other. We cannot, in-

deed, know the power of the temptation. We cannot pretend to determine the limits of responsibility for infirmity of will. We only know that, however supreme and resistless the genius of a man may be, it does not absolve him from the moral obligation that binds us all. It would not have comforted Jeanie Deans, as she held the sorrowing Effie to her heart, to know that the "fause lover" who "staw" her rose was named Shakespeare or Burns. Nor is there any baser prostitution than that which would grace self-indulgence with an immortal name. If a boy is a dunce at school, it is a foolish parent who consoles himself with remembering that Walter Scott was a dull school-boy. It was not Scott's dulness that made him the magician. It was not the revelling at Poesie Nansie's and the Globe Tavern, and the reckless life at Mauchline and Mossgiel, that endeared Robert Burns to mankind. Just there is the mournful tragedy of his story. Just there lies its pathetic appeal. The young man who would gild his dissipation with the celestial glamour of Burns's name snatches the glory of a star to light him to destruction. But it is no less true, and in the deepest and fullest meaning of his own words,

"What's done we partly may compute,  
But know not what's resisted."

"Except for grace," said Bunyan, "I should have been yonder sinner." "Granted," says Burns's brother man and brother Scot, Thomas Carlyle, in the noblest plea that one man of genius ever made for another—"Granted the ship comes into harbor with shroud and tackle



damaged, and the pilot is, therefore, blameworthy, for he has not been all-wise and all-powerful; but to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the globe or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs."

But we unveil to-day and set here for perpetual contemplation, not the monument of the citizen at whom respectable Dumfries looked askance, but the statue of a great poet. Once more we recognize that no gift is more divine than his, that no influence is more profound, that no human being is a truer benefactor of his kind. The spiritual power of poetry, indeed, like that of natural beauty, is immeasurable, and it is not easy to define and describe Burns's service to the world. But, without critical and careful detail of observation, it is plain, first of all, that he interpreted Scotland as no other country has been revealed by a kindred genius. Were Scotland suddenly submerged and her people swept away, the tale of her politics and kings and great events would survive in histories. But essential Scotland, the customs, legends, superstitions, language; the grotesque humor, the keen sagacity, the simple, serious faith, the characteristic spirit of the national life, caught up and preserved in the sympathy of poetic genius, would live forever in the poet's verse. The sun of Scotland sparkles in it; the birds of Scotland sing; its breezes rustle, its waters murmur. Each "timorous wee beastie," the "ourie cattle," and the "silly sheep," are softly penned and gathered in this all-embracing fold of song. Over the dauntless battle-hymn of "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled" rises the solemn music of

the "Cotter's Saturday Night." Through the weird witch romance of "Tam O'Shanter" breathes the scent of the wild rose of Alloway, and the daring and astounding babel of the "Jolly Beggars" is penetrated by the heart-breaking sigh to Jessie:

"Although thou maun never be mine,  
Although even hope is denied,  
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing  
Than aught in the world beside."

The poet touches every scene and sound, every thought and feeling—but the refrain of all is Scotland. To what other man was it ever given so to transfigure the country of his birth and love? Every bird and flower, every hill and dale and river, whispers and repeats his name, and the word Scotland is sweeter because of Robert Burns.

But in thus casting a poetic spell upon everything distinctively Scotch, Burns fostered a patriotism which has become proverbial. The latest historian of England says that at the time of Burns's birth England was mad with hatred of the Scots. But when Burns died there was not a Scotchman who was not proud of being a Scotchman. A Scotch ploughman, singing of his fellow-peasants and their lives and loves in their own language, had given them in their own eyes a dignity they had never known:

"A man's a man for a' that."

And America is but the sublime endeavor to make the ploughman's words true. Great poets, before and after Burns, have been honored by their countries and by the



world; but is there any great poet of any time or country who has so taken the heart of what our Abraham Lincoln, himself one of them, called the plain people, that, as was lately seen in Edinburgh, when he had been dead nearly a hundred years, workmen going home from work begged to look upon this statue for the love and honor they bore to Robbie Burns? They love him for their land's sake, and they are better Scotchmen because of him. England does not love Shakespeare, nor Italy Dante, nor Germany Goethe, with the passionate ardor with which Scotland loves Burns. It is no wonder, for here is Auld Scotia's thistle bloomed out into a flower so fair that its beauty and perfume fill the world with joy.

But the power thus to depict national life and character, and thus to kindle an imperishable patriotism, cannot be limited by any nationality or country. In setting words to Scotch melodies Burns turns to music the emotions common to humanity, and so he passes from the exclusive love of Scotland into the reverence of the world. Burns died at the same age with Raphael; and Mozart, who was his contemporary, died only four years before him. Raphael and Mozart are the two men of lyrical genius in kindred arts who impress us as most exquisitely refined by careful cultivation; and, although Burns was of all great poets the most unschooled, he belongs in poetry with Raphael in painting and Mozart in music, and there is no fourth. An indescribable richness and flower-like quality, a melodious grace and completeness and delicacy, belong to them all. Looking upon a beautiful human Madonna of



Raphael, we seem to hear the rippling cadence of Mozart and the tender and true song of Burns. They are all voices of the whole world speaking in the accent of a native land. Here are Italy and Germany and Scotland, distinct, individual, perfectly recognizable; but the sun that reveals and illuminates their separate charm, that is not Italian or German or Scotch, it is the sun of universal nature. This is the singer whom this statue commemorates, the singer of songs immortal as love, pure as the dew of the morning, and sweet as its breath; songs with which the lover wooes his bride, and the mother soothes her child, and the heart of a people beats with patriotic exultation; songs that cheer human endeavor, and console human sorrow, and exalt human life. We cannot find out the secret of their power. Until we know why the rose is sweet, or the dew-drop pure, or the rainbow beautiful, we cannot know why the poet is the best benefactor of humanity. Whether because he reveals us to ourselves, or because he touches the soul with the fervor of divine aspiration; whether because, in a world of sordid and restless anxiety, he fills us with serene joy, or puts into rhythmic and permanent form the best thoughts and hopes of man—who shall say? But none the less is the heart's instinctive loyalty to the poet the proof of its consciousness that he does all these things; that he is the harmonizer, strengthener, and consoler. How the faith of Christendom has been stayed for centuries upon the mighty words of the old Hebrew bards and prophets, and how the vast and inexpressible mystery of Divine love and power and purpose has been best breathed in parable and poem! If

we were forced to surrender every expression of human genius but one, surely we should retain poetry; and if we were called to lose from the vast accumulation of literature all but a score of books, among that choice and perfect remainder would be the songs of Burns.

How fitly, then, among the memorials of great men, of those who in different countries and times and ways have been leaders of mankind, we raise this statue of the poet whose genius is an unconscious but sweet and elevating influence in our national life. It is not a power dramatic, obvious, imposing, immediate, like that of the statesman, the warrior, and the inventor, but it is as deep and strong and abiding. The soldier fights for his native land, but the poet touches that land with the charm that makes it worth fighting for, and fires the warrior's heart with the fierce energy that makes his blow invincible. The statesman enlarges and orders liberty in the State, but the poet fosters the love of liberty in the heart of the citizen. The inventor multiplies the facilities of life, but the poet makes life better worth living. Here, then, among trees and flowers and waters; here upon the greensward and under the open sky; here where birds carol, and children play, and lovers whisper, and the various stream of human life flows by—we raise the statue of Robert Burns. While the human heart beats, that name will be music in human ears. He knew better than we the pathos of human life. We know better than he the infinite pathos of his own. Ah, Robert Burns, Robert Burns! whoever lingers here as he passes and muses upon your statue will see in imagination a solitary mountain in your own

beautiful Scotland, heaven-soaring, wrapped in impenetrable clouds. Suddenly the mists part, and there are the heather, the brier-rose, and the gowan fine ; there are the

“burnies, wimplin’ down your glens  
Wi’ toddlin’ din,  
Or foaming strang wi’ hasty stens  
Frae lin to lin ;”

the cushat is moaning ; the curlew is calling ; the plover is singing ; the red deer is bounding ; and look ! the clouds roll utterly away, and the clear summit is touched with the tender glory of sunshine, heaven’s own benediction !



XIII

THE LIFE, CHARACTER, AND WRITINGS OF  
WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

A COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW  
YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AT THE ACADEMY OF  
MUSIC, NEW YORK CITY, DECEMBER 30, 1878



## WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

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THIS great and distinguished assembly is in itself an imposing tribute to the memory of an illustrious man. But even more impressive than this presence of genius and distinction, of character and intelligence, is the absence of one citizen — that venerable figure which had come to represent in this community all the civic graces and virtues, and from whose temperate lips on every occasion of literary and patriotic commemoration, of political emergency or of public appeal, we have been accustomed to hear the fitting words of counsel, of encouragement, of consolation. When Cooper died, the restless city paused to hear Bryant's words of praise and friendship. When Irving followed Cooper, all hearts turned to Bryant, and it was before this society and in this place that he told the story of Irving's life. Now Bryant has followed Cooper and Irving, the last of that early triumvirate of American literature, not less renowned than the great triumvirate of American politics, and he whose life began before the century leaves behind but one of his early literary contemporaries. The venerable poet Dana, friend of Bryant's youth, at an age prolonged beyond fourscore and ten —



"An old age, serene and bright,  
And lovely as a Lapland night"—

the editor who published "Thanatopsis" sixty-one years ago, has seen its author join the innumerable caravan and lie down to pleasant dreams. But a thousand eloquent and reverent voices of the press and the pulpit, of the college and the club, of orator and poet, from the sea-coast to the prairies, have spoken for him who spoke for all. There was no eminent American upon whom the judgment of his countrymen would be more immediate and unanimous. The broad and simple outline of his character and career had become universally familiar, like a mountain or the sea, and in speaking of him I but repeat the thought of every American, and register a judgment already pronounced. A patriarch of our literature, and in a permanent sense the oldest of our poets, a scholar familiar with many languages and literatures, finely sensitive to the influence of nature, and familiar with trees and birds and flowers, he was especially fitted, it might be thought, for scholarly seclusion and the delights of the strict literary life. But he who melodiously marked the solitary way of the water-fowl through the rosy depth of the glowing heaven, and on the lonely New England hills—

"Rock-ribbed, and ancient as the sun"—

saw in the river and valley, in forest and ocean, only the solemn decoration of man's tomb—the serious, musing country boy, felt also the magic of human sympathy, the impulse of his country, the political genius of his race, and the poet became distinctively an American

and a public political leader. In the active American life of this century he bore his full part, never quailing, never doubting, giving and taking blows; stern often, reserved, unsparing, but panoplied, ever in an armor which no fabled Homeric hero wore, beyond the art of Vulcan to forge or the dark waters of the Styx to charm—the impenetrable armor of moral principle. Time as it passed chastened the ardor of the partisan, without relaxing the vital interest of the citizen in public affairs. His lofty personality rose above the clamor of selfish ambition, and in his life he reconciled, both in fact and to the popular imagination, the seeming incompatibility of literary taste and accomplishment and superiority with constant political activity. So rises the shining dome of Mont Blanc above the clustering forests and the roaring streams, and on its towering sides the growths of various climates and of different zones in due order meet and mingle. It is by no official title, by no mere literary fame, by no signal or single service or work, no marvellous Lear or Transfiguration, no stroke of state-craft calling to political life a new world to redress the balance of the old, no resounding Austerlitz or triumphant Trafalgar, that Bryant is commemorated. There may have been, in his long lifetime, genius more affluent and creative, greater renown, abilities more commanding, careers more dazzling and romantic; but no man, no American, living or dead, has more truly and amply illustrated the scope and the fidelity of republican citizenship.

Something of this is explained by the time and place of his birth, and the influences that moulded his child-



hood. At the close of the last century, his father, Peter Bryant, a physician and the son of a physician, followed the family of his future wife from Bridgewater, in Massachusetts, westward across the Connecticut River, and up into the Hampshire hills to Cummington, where the first pioneer had built his cabin scarcely thirty years before; and there, in 1794, Bryant was born. Western Massachusetts is a high hill country, with secluded green valleys—a farming and grazing region; but every little stream turns a mill, and along the water-courses the air hums with the music of a various industry. The great hills are still largely covered with woods that shelter the solitary pastures and upland farms; woods beautiful in spring with the white laurel and azalea, ringing through the short summer with the song of the hermit-thrush and the full-choired music of New England birds, and in autumn blazing with scarlet and gold of the changing leaf, until the cold splendor of the snowy winter closes the year.

All trace of the house in which Bryant was born is gone; but the broad landscape that the boy saw remains, softened now by tillage and orchards, but a grave, solitary landscape still. The region was soon familiar to him. Not only its serious spirit touched his soul and left its inextinguishable impress upon his character, but he knew it in detail—its trees, its shrubs and plants, their history and uses, the habits and resorts of all its birds and beasts; and this knowledge gave the man the accuracy of a naturalist. The very spirit of primitive New England brooded over the thinly peopled hills, and in the little villages and farms, and



in the bare meeting-house and log school-house were cherished and perpetuated the Puritan traditions and character that have made a great people. In the more secluded communities of that region the simple and robust virtues of a vanished century still linger, and we may see in them to-day what our fathers beheld, and, beholding, joyfully believed a republic possible—a republic of honest, equal, intelligent, self-respecting citizens, the republic of Franklin and of Adams, the republic of Lincoln and of Bryant. He was not born too late to see and feel among the people of the hills the spirit of the Revolution—to hear, by the blazing winter fire, tales which are now romantic legends, told by their own heroes, stories of Bennington and Bunker Hill, of Ticonderoga and Saratoga; and doubtless, also, he had himself seen some of the Hampshire recruits of Shays's rebellion, which sprang from the confusion and suffering that followed the Revolution. There were remoter and more terrible traditions also: tales of the old French war, of Port Royal and Louisburg; legends of the beautiful valley of the Connecticut, which King Philip's war had wasted; cruel memories of Deerfield, and Hadley, and Turner's Falls, and of the fatally luxuriant meadow where the flower of Essex lay bleeding.

Bryant has described the sports of his boyhood and the customs of the country-side. They are not all gone. The columns of smoke rising over the woods from the maple-sugar camp, in the chill air of March and early April, eighty years ago, still hang above them; and when, under the reddening trees of the last October, I went to the grave of his father in the lonely

burial-ground on the hill, the farmer was piling upon the barn floor the long, rustling heaps of corn for the husking, as the boy Bryant saw them. His books were "Sandford and Merton" and Mrs. Barbauld, the "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Robinson Crusoe," and Berquin's stories and Watts's Hymns. But the father early trained his son in the books that he himself liked to read—Pope and Gray and Goldsmith—and his son soon began to echo their music. The boy wrote verses at ten which the happy father sent to the *Hampshire Gazette*, at Northampton, a paper which had been established with true American instinct, in the midst of the excitement of Shays's rebellion, to encourage loyalty to law. It was a fitting journal in which to print the earliest verses of the future editor who was always to defend law as the palladium of liberty.

To this secluded mountain village, and to the boy and his father, who had evidently a singular sympathy even at that age, the news of the great world came by the weekly post. There were then printed during the week, in all New England, only thirty thousand copies of newspapers, and among them there was but one daily paper. But the whole country glowed with political ardor. The river gods, as the heads of leading families in the valley of the Connecticut were called, were uncompromising Federalists, and so were the social powers of the hills. The Federal Dr. Bryant trained his son in his own political views, and, doubtless, he thought to good purpose, when, before his fourteenth birthday, the son had written "The Embargo," a poem which reflected, in Pope's decasyllable, the universal



Federal hatred of Thomas Jefferson. Percival, also, who was but ten months younger than Bryant, displayed at the same age of thirteen the fervor of Connecticut Federalism in his "Commerciad," a poem of two thousand two hundred and sixty-eight lines, which probably nobody ever read through, in which he was as unsparing upon Mr. Jefferson as the young Bryant, but somewhat less smooth in versification :

"There Hillhouse, born our country's rights to guard,  
To keep our people from the statutes hard  
Of cursèd Jefferson, son of the Devil,  
Whose thoughts are wicked, and whose mind is evil."

Such rhymes of boys are but songs of the mocking-bird; yet they show the intensity and bitterness of the political feeling amid which Bryant was trained, at a time which we sometimes fondly call the golden age of the Republic. But a time in which boys were taught to call Jefferson the Devil, and in which it was said of Washington that he was the source of all the misfortunes of the country, was a time whose frantic political vituperation pales the "uneffectual fire" of our own, and in whose mad extravagance we may well study the baseness of partisan ribaldry.

Bryant learned Latin and Greek readily, and he was sixteen years old when, in October, 1810, he joined the sophomore class at Williams College. One of his classmates, General Charles F. Sedgwick, still living in an honored age, describes the wiry and well-knit figure of the young poet, the beauty of his face, and his full-flowing, dark-brown hair when he came to the college.



The reputation of his early verses and the rumor of his genius were like an aureole about the head of the modest young scholar; but he was never known to speak of his verses, nor did his companions allude to them. One day, however, to the delight of the class and of the tutor, he recited an original poem, and to a few friends he read a translation of an ode of Anacreon. During his brief college life Bryant was mild and gentlemanly, unobtrusive in his conduct, grave in conversation, diligent in study, associating naturally with the quiet and orderly students. But he was not contented. The boy had come down from the pure breezes of the hills into what seemed to him the closer and less healthful air of the little village, not then as now one of the loveliest of the beautiful villages of New England, and at the end of his second term, May 1, 1811, having been at college only seven months, he took an honorable dismissal. The college, however, subsequently granted him his degree, and restored his name to the catalogue. Before Bryant left, he read before a college society a short, humorously sarcastic poem upon his alma mater, a boyish freak at which he always smiled. The harmless verse survives, I believe, only in the recollection of the Rev. Dr. Hallock, son of the Plainfield pastor who fitted Bryant for college. But Dr. Hallock, with delicate fidelity to the fame of his college and his friend, has locked it fast in his memory and jealously guards the key. Upon leaving Williams, Bryant had hoped to go with his chum to Yale College, but his father found that the cost would be too great, so the youth returned to his father's house

and devoted himself for a year to the classics and mathematics.

This was the end of Bryant's schooling, and this was all the visible preparation for the writing of the first enduring poem in American literature—the work, indeed, from which that literature distinctively dates—the poem which, in all the after, riper fruitage of the poet's genius, was never surpassed. The marvel of "Thanatopsis" is the greater, because, although a singularly mature and precocious boy, there is no sign in Bryant's earlier verses, flowing and correct as they are, of original power. In Raphael's early pictures there is evidently the overmastering influence of Perugino, but there is also a finer and humaner touch. In Beethoven's first music there is often the rhythmical reminiscence of Mozart, but there are also signs of the power and grandeur which we know by the master's name. But in the earlier verses of Bryant, as in Byron's "Hours of Idleness," there is no presage of his genius, no prelude of his fame.

Bryant said that "Thanatopsis" was written soon after leaving college. He was not sure whether it was in his eighteenth or nineteenth year, but it was before he began the study of the law in 1813. For some reason he did not send it to the *Hampshire Gazette*, nor seek a publication in any form. But once, upon leaving home, he placed the manuscript of "Thanatopsis," with that of other verses, in a drawer in his father's office. It must have lain there for some months when Dr. Bryant, then a member of the Legislature, finding the poems in his drawer, sent them, anonymously, and without his son's



knowledge, to the *North American Review*, which had then been published for two years, and was at once a review and a magazine. Mr. Dana, who was one of the editors, immediately recognized the worth of the poem, and said, what no man was more qualified than he to declare, that it could not have been written in this country, for he knew no American who could write it. He was told that the author was a member of the Legislature, and he hastened to the Senate Chamber, where Dr. Bryant was pointed out to him. "'Tis a good head," he said, "but I do not see 'Thanatopsis' there." The poem was published in the September number of the *Review* in 1817, and it is preceded by a separate poem of four stanzas, which was attached to it by mistake. Their tone is that of the same melancholy fascination with death, but they are in a wholly different key. "Thanatopsis" itself, as originally printed, contained but forty-nine of the eighty-one lines that we know, and it was accompanied by three of the manuscripts which the doctor had found in his office drawer: the "Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood," and two translations from Horace.

This is all that we know of the production of this poem. I linger upon it, because it was the first adequate poetic voice of the solemn New England spirit; and in the grandeur of the hills, in the heroic Puritan tradition of sacrifice and endurance, in the daily life, saddened by imperious and awful theologic dogma, in the hard circumstance of the pioneer household, the contest with the wilderness, the grim legends of Indians and the war, have we not some outward clue to the



strain of "Thanatopsis," the depthless and entrancing sadness, as of inexorable fate, that murmurs, like the autumn wind through the forest, in the melancholy cadences of this hymn to Death? Moreover, it was without a harbinger in our literature, and without a trace of the English masters of the hour. The contrast in literary splendor of Europe and America, at the beginning of the century, seemed to many a sensitive American as hopeless as it was conspicuous. The great German epoch of Goethe and Schiller was at its highest glory, and, in England, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Shelley, Keats, Campbell, Moore, and Byron were in full song when "Thanatopsis" was published. The contrast was, indeed, hard. In vain the patriotic President Dwight had said that Trumbull's "MacFingal" was as good as "Hudibras," for who would speak for President Dwight, and what courage was equal to saying that his "Conquest of Canaan" was as good as Milton's "Paradise Lost"? Yet Trumbull and Dwight, Barlow and Freneau, were our chief names in poetry, and Barlow's burlesque, "Hasty Pudding," was the best characteristic American poem when "Thanatopsis" appeared. "Shall we match Joel Barlow," exclaimed Fisher Ames a little earlier, "against Homer and Hesiod? Can Thomas Paine contend against Plato, or could Findlay's history of his own (whiskey) insurrection vie with Sallust's narrative of Catiline's?" We are apt to say that the conditions of colonial settlement are not favorable to literary and artistic development. But it is easy to overestimate the value of mere circumstance, and it is always the genius, not the circum-

stance, that controls. Canova used to say, that if Pitt and Fox had lived in Italy they would have been artists; but we must not therefore conclude that Eli Whitney was Dante under new conditions, and that if David Crockett had been born in Augustan Rome, he would probably have come down to us as a poet-like Virgil. Great histories will hardly be written upon the frontier of a new country; but Robert Burns, in a hovel, sang songs as pure as the dew-drop and sweet as the morning. It is precisely the intellectual force and independence, the nameless and mysterious genius shown in "Thanatopsis"—a poem so purely original and unexpected that Dana said that it could not have been written by an American—which made it the pioneer of national literature, and which placed the poem at once in the literature of the world.

When "Thanatopsis" was published, Bryant was already a practising lawyer. He had begun his studies with Judge Samuel Howe, of Worthington, near Cummington—who, when he found a volume of Wordsworth in his student's hands, warned him that such reading would spoil his style—and he was admitted to the bar at Plymouth in 1815. He opened an office for a year in Plainfield, where he had fitted for college; but few clients came, and in 1816, in the month of October, he says, when the woods were in all the glory of autumn, he turned his back upon the Hampshire hills for the adjoining county of Berkshire, and settled in Great Barrington. In Berkshire he passed nine years, and there some of his most familiar verses were written. A companion of those days, the venerable Ralph Taylor, who



lived in the same house with him, remembers that he was fond of roaming over the hills, and in his walks was very genial and sociable. He had gay comrades, too, village revellers; but Bryant, then as always, quietly held his own temperate way, unseduced by fatal good-fellowship. He was an active, learned, and, as I have heard, even a fiery young lawyer, and his name appears four or five times in the reports of the supreme court. He was also a true son of the land of the town-meeting, and he did not evade his duty as a citizen. On January 1, 1818, he delivered an address before the Great Barrington Bible Society, and in 1820 he was elected clerk of the town, and remained in office until he removed to New York. As a justice of the peace, his first act was the marriage of a gentleman still living; and as town-clerk, in January, 1821, he recorded in the town-book his own marriage—that marriage to which the sacred and hidden allusions in his verse are exquisitely touching and tender, and which was the most gracious and beautiful influence of his life. For the forty-five years that they lived together his wife was his only really intimate friend, and when she died he had no other. He was young, his fame was growing, and with domestic duties, with literary studies and work, and professional and public activities, his tranquil days passed in the happy valley of the Housatonic.

It is plain, however, that Bryant's taste, his temperament, his natural powers, were averse to the law. The literary instinct was always stirring in his heart, and there are constant and delightful traces of his literary industry at this time. In March, 1818, he published in



the *North American Review* a fragment of Simonides, the "Lines to a Water-fowl," and a poem to a friend upon his marriage, in which the poet gayly declares what he daily disproved:

"And I that loved to trace the woods before,  
And climb the hill, a playmate to the breeze,  
Have vowed to tune the rural lay no more,  
Have bid my useless classics sleep at ease,  
And left the race of bards to scribble, starve, and freeze."

If he thought himself willing to leave the Muse, she was not ready to desert him. In the next July he contributed to the *Review* an interesting paper upon American poetry, in which he finds little to praise, but thinks that it was better than could have been expected in a young nation just beginning to attend to intellectual refinement; and he concludes felicitously, but discouragingly, that the only poets we had could hardly be more admired "without danger to the taste of the nation." A year later, in June, 1819, he published a short essay in the *North American Review*, on "The Happy Temperament," which is singularly interesting as the work of a poet whose strain is sometimes called remote from human sympathy, and a man who was so often thought to be cold and austere. It is not, says the author of "Thanatopsis," the shallow, unsympathetic disposition which laughs all ills away that is to be called happy, because the "melancholy feelings, when called up by their proper and natural causes, and confined to their proper limits, are the parents of almost all our virtues." "The temperament of an unbroken cheerfulness," says our poet, "is the temperament of insensi-

bility." A paper in the September number of the same year, on Trisyllabic Feet, in iambic verse, shows his constant and careful study of the literary art as well as of literature. In the summer of 1821 the author, whose genius had been first recognized by the literary tribunal of Cambridge, read before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Harvard College, his longest poem, "The Ages." It is a simple, serious, and thoughtful survey of history, tracing a general law of progress; and the stately Spenserian measure is marked by the moderation, the sinewy simplicity, the maturity, and freedom from mannerism which are Bryant's sign-manual. The last stanza of this poem breathes in majestic music that pure passion for America, and that strong and sublime faith in her destiny, which constantly appears in his verse and never wavered in his heart. It was the era of the Holy Alliance in Europe, the culmination of the reaction against the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, when popular liberty was in mortal peril; and, after a glance at struggling Europe, the poet exclaims,

"But thou, my country! thou shalt never fall,  
But with thy children—thy maternal care,  
Thy lavish love, thy blessings showered on all—  
These are thy fetters; seas and stormy air  
Are the wide barrier of thy borders, where,  
Among thy gallant sons that guard thee well,  
Thou laugh'st at enemies! Who shall then declare  
The date of thy deep-founded strength, or tell  
How happy in thy lap the sons of men shall dwell?"

He was already acknowledged to be the first of our poets, and he himself dates the dawn of our literature in the year 1821, the year of his marriage and of his

Harvard poem. It was in that year that Cooper's "Spy" was published and Irving's "Sketch-Book" was completed, and Bryant's own first slight volume was issued; Dana's "Idle Man" was just finished, and Miss Sedgwick had already published "Hope Leslie." Two years before Percival's first volume had appeared, which Edward Everett had saluted as a harbinger of great achievements; and Halleck's and Drake's "Croakers" were already popular. Bryant's ambition, his hopes, his conscious power, secretly solicited him and weaned him more and more from the law. The rigor of his Federalism also was relaxing. During the earlier days of his life, in Berkshire, his name appears officially signed to notices and reports of Federal meetings and caucuses, but he was not known to make political speeches, nor to be an active politician. All signs, even of such political interest, however, disappear towards the end of his residence in Great Barrington, although he undoubtedly voted, in 1824, for John Quincy Adams, as there was but one vote cast against him in the town.

For some time Bryant had counted among his most faithful friends the Sedgwicks of Stockbridge, one of the most noted of the Berkshire families. In 1820, Miss Sedgwick wrote from Stockbridge that she had sent for Bryant, and he had called upon her as he came from court. She found him of a charming countenance; very modest, but not bashful, and he very readily promised to write some hymns for her friend, Mr. Sewall. Two years later she writes from New York that Bryant had been in town, and that she had never seen him so



happy nor half so agreeable. She describes him as very much animated with his prospects, meaning evidently his literary prospects, and full of good-sense, good judgment, and moderation. Miss Sedgwick's brother, Henry, was Bryant's especial friend, and Mr. Sedgwick's hereditary Federalism was overborne by his profound interest in the question of free-trade. He wrote articles, pamphlets, and essays against Mr. Clay's American and tariff system, and his arguments found a prompt and ready response in Bryant's instinctive love of liberty. Perhaps, as his friend eloquently talked, the young poet recalled the lines of Pope in "Windsor Forest," lines that he must often have read with his father, and often afterwards in fancy applied to the noble bay and harbor of this great city :

"The time shall come when, free as seas or wind,  
Unbounded Thames shall flow for all mankind ;  
Whole nations enter with each swelling tide,  
And seas but join the regions they divide ;  
Earth's distant ends our glory shall behold,  
And the New World launch forth to seek the Old."

Mr. Sedgwick, wishing to see Bryant in a larger sphere, urged him constantly to remove to New York, and Bryant's heart took sides with his friend. He came to see the city, and a very little event soon broke the slight thread that held him to the law. The tradition of the local bar is, that in 1824 Bryant had obtained for a client a verdict for slander; but judgment was arrested upon appeal, because of a technical omission in Bryant's declaration, although Chief-Justice Parsons virtually admitted the justice of the claim. There is a

further tradition, that a difference with one of the opposing counsel about the cost of the suit was one of the occasions in which the restrained fire of the poet's temperament blazed fiercely forth. It was easy for a man whose wishes sought an excuse for leaving the law, to find it in what seemed to him a denial of acknowledged justice by the highest legal tribunal. To his indignant mind the law probably seemed, despite Coke's famous words, the perfection of unreason; and the poet, bent upon closing his office, and loving his Wordsworth more than his Blackstone, may well have felt that if the seat of law be the bosom of God, it had returned whence it came. Bryant had tried his last case. He left Berkshire, but while its Monument Mountain stands and its Green River flows, Berkshire will claim their poet as her own. One of the last of the Berkshire poems was the "June," which was first published in the year after he left Great Barrington, the poet's farewell to

"the glorious sky,  
And the green uplands round;"

the farewell whose pensive and airy music was in all hearts and on all lips when he died, as he had fancifully wished, in June.

The New York to which Bryant came to live by literature was a city of a hundred and eighty thousand inhabitants, the pleasant city of which Paulding says, in his "New Pilgrim's Progress," that the dandy under no temptation must extend his walk beyond the northwest corner of Chambers Street. The solid city reached a little beyond Canal Street, and a line of houses strag-



gled up as far as Fourth Street. There were those who still remembered the pebbly shore of the Hudson River just above Barclay Street, which was the favorite walk of Jonathan Edwards, when he was preaching for a time in the church in Wall Street, and Bryant speaks of his own delight in rambling along the wooded shores of the Hudson above Canal Street. The house of his friend Sedgwick, whose sister Catharine was already famous, was the resort of the Knickerbocker wits and authors, and of all literary strangers. To this modest Holland House came Verplanck, Halleck, Hillhouse, Cooper, Moore, Chancellor Kent, Dunlap, Jarvis, De Kay, Jacob Harvey, Durand, Henry James Anderson; and from this charmed circle Cooper afterwards founded a club, which met weekly in Washington Hall. The year of Bryant's arrival in New York was that of the beginning of the Sketch Club and the founding of the National Academy of Design. To this academy he was always loyal, and he writes proudly from London, in 1845, of the exhibition of the Royal Academy, "I see nothing in it to astonish one who has visited the exhibition of our Academy of the Arts of Design in New York."

His work began at once, but the *New York Review*, which he edited, and other literary enterprises, soon failed; and in the year 1826, when he was thirty-two years old, he became associate editor, with William Coleman, of the *Evening Post*. It was the memorable year of the first jubilee of our independence. Peace and prosperity seemed to be assured, and the mighty flood of American civilization, with a people grown in



fifty years from three millions to ten, was sweeping from the sea-coast over the Alleghanies, and far westward beyond the Mississippi, leaving in every valley and on every hill-top, as it passed, the bold enterprise, the ready invention, the nimble skill, the cheerful and heroic endurance, the religious sobriety, all the robust qualities that found and perpetuate great States. Lafayette had just crossed the ocean to see with rejoicing eyes the glory of the nation whose generous soldier he had been. De Witt Clinton had just led in triumph the waters of Lake Erie to the sea; and in the year in which Bryant began his editorial life John Adams and Jefferson had died, happy in the undoubted security of their work; and Webster, summoned to speak the reverent gratitude of a nation, had delivered the oration in Faneuil Hall which instantly passed into the class-books and speakers, and was declaimed in every school-house in the land. The country had not lost its original character of a rural republic. Political feeling, as we have seen, was intense; but the vast political hierarchy which has sprung from patronage, and which now, with far-reaching and elaborate organization, constitutes a distinct and disciplined class of middle-men for the control of politics, was practically unknown, and the movements of parties, therefore, more truly represented the convictions of the people. John Quincy Adams was President, a man of unsullied character, of great ability, of resolute independence, superior to party trick or personal intrigue; a civilian of will as indomitable as that of his military successor—a President—and such may our Presidents always be!—who

believed that he serves his party best who serves his country most.

This was the fortunate epoch and this the happy country of 1826. It was also the end and the beginning of party organizations. Mr. Adams favored what was called a magnificent national policy, a system of international improvements, of superb public works, a continental alliance with South America, a protective tariff. Bryant was more interested in the freedom of trade than in any other pending public question, and the general argument for freedom of trade was an argument for the limited function of the national government. Bryant's subsequent editorial associate, Mr. Bigelow, tells us that, upon undertaking the joint editorship of the *Post*, a paper which had been founded under the auspices of Hamilton, the father of protection and of the United States Bank, the only condition that the young poet from the hills made was an unfettered freedom to advocate the emancipation of commerce from severe restrictions, and the separation of the money of the government from the banking capital of the country.

It was at this time, in the years 1823 and the two following years, that England, under Huskisson, abandoned the old system of protection, and made the changes in commercial legislation which are regarded as the first practical application of the principles of free-trade. The contest in this country began at once upon the revision of the tariff of 1824, and the passage of that of 1828, from which sprang nullification. It was a great debate, in which sectional feeling was fiercely inflamed, and in which also Web-



ster and Calhoun changed ground. It was the first important public discussion in which Bryant engaged, and he was soon involved in it with all the fire of conviction and all the energy of his nature. The *Post* was the sole advocate, in the free States, of the policy and the justice of the principles of free-trade. With resolute pertinacity, through good and evil report, Bryant maintained that the condition of higher civilization, the surest pledge of international peace and justice, and the security of American prosperity, was freedom of commercial exchange. He fought this battle for more than fifty years; the last article that he wrote for his paper was a discussion of the balance of trade, and he died in the faith, acknowledged as one of its most powerful champions. Meanwhile General Jackson had declared for a "judicious" tariff. The *Post* supported him for the Presidency; and in 1829, the year of Jackson's inauguration, Mr. Coleman died, and Bryant became chief editor. But his devotion to freedom of exchange was like that which he cherished for all other freedom. It was American liberty, not what the English laureate, speaking of revolutionary France, calls "the blind hysterics of the Celt." It was the freedom of the citizen in the State, and the freedom of the State in the Union. It was liberty under law that he sought, for he knew that lawless revolution is a remedy more appalling than the evils it would cure. He had pointed out, in principle and in detail, the injustice of the tariff towards the Southern States; but when nullification was proposed as a remedy, his voice was prompt, clear, and decisive



in sustaining General Jackson's proclamation—true to national union in 1832 as he was in 1861.

But, from the day that Bryant began to edit the *Post*, there was but one question which was really supreme, the question which hung like a huge storm-cloud in the summer sky, its lightning sheathed, its thunder silent, but gathering with every moment angrier force and more appalling fury—the question with whose final and tremendous settlement the land still heaves. It had apparently disappeared in the deceitful calm that followed the Missouri struggle, but the first penetrating and significant note of a tempest not to be stayed was heard within four years of Bryant's removal to New York, in the moral antislavery appeal of Lundy and Garrison. Bryant seemed to the ardent leaders of that great agitation as the multitude of editors and politicians seemed to them, indifferent and hesitating, too cold and reluctant for their own generous wrath and zeal. In his letters from the Southern States and the West Indies, as late as 1849, there is a photographic fidelity of detail in descriptions of slavery and of the slaves, but they are the pictures of a seemingly passionless observer. There is no apparent sense of wrong, no flaming indignation, no denunciation; an occasional impulsive expression only shows his feelings. This restraint and moderation, however, always so characteristic, are most impressive, and give to his prose, whether in letters or addresses or editorial articles, however strong the public feeling or hot the debate, the weight and value which so often exhale in greater fervor of expression. But the breath of the tropics did

not relax his moral fibre. The loiterer at the negro corn-shucking in Carolina and in the orange groves of Florida, the tranquil stranger in the Cuban coffee estates and the sugar plantations of Matanzas, who observed everything and quietly asked a traveller's questions, was not untrue to the spirit that he had inhaled with his native breath among the Northern hills.

Through all the great slavery contest from 1820 to 1861, which included the prime of his manhood, Bryant's course was determined by his own love of liberty and justice, by his temperament and conscience. He repelled the reproaches of friends equally with the gibes of enemies. When the moral appeal swelled to an agitation under which the country rocked; when there were even voices heard in Faneuil Hall justifying the assassination of Lovejoy; and American freemen speaking in New York for liberty were silenced by mobs, and with no consuming wrath of protest from the respectable public opinion of the city—although Bryant, as I think, deprecated the agitation as mistaken in its method, and necessarily futile and disastrous in its result, he resolutely defended the fundamental right of discussion, which was the practical and essential anti-slavery demand.

Early in 1837, when the House of Representatives tried to stifle the antislavery petitions presented by John Quincy Adams—and they might as well have tried to blow out the sun—Bryant denounced the folly and the wrong of attempting to “muzzle discussion in this country;” and in the same year, when the colored voters of New York asked the Legislature to grant



them suffrage upon the same conditions with the white voters, Bryant sustained their prayer as just, and disdained any deference to external dictation, whether from the South, from the North, or from any other quarter. With the same clear perception and inflexible principle he held that Congress had perfect power over the question of slavery in the District of Columbia; and he sternly condemned all interference with the right of any body of citizens anywhere in the country to declare their views upon the subject by petition to their representatives. To-day, in the full sunlight of constitutional personal liberty, these angry debates seem like the strange spectres of a cloudy night. Their echoes are remote and unreal, like those of Attila's battle in the air. But, in telling the story of the life of a reverend citizen who saw the beginning and the end of that tremendous contest, the struggle in which the institutions and the principles that we all love and trust were tried by blood and fire, emerging at last to victory, but emerging only through

"exultations, agonies,  
And love, and man's unconquerable mind,"—

victory not for one side, but for all men; not for provincial sections, but for national union; not for the North nor for the South, but for America and universal liberty,—in telling the story of such a life, the men and the contests of old days spring again to light, we see how continuous is the stream of history, and we learn once more that the welfare of liberty and civilization is intrusted to precisely those qualities which Bryant displayed in his editorial career.



His temperament was conservative in the truest sense, but his political convictions and sympathies were in the same sense liberal and democratic. The old Federal distrust of the people—which, in later days and under other conditions, has seemed to so many honest and patriotic men to be justified as only a proper fear of ignorance and corruption, yet a distrust which, however logical it may seem in argument and detail, is refuted by the marvellous and beneficent American history of a century—was a doubt which Bryant never shared. As Sir Philip Sidney warned the young poet to look into his own heart and write, so his good genius taught Bryant to look into his own heart and believe. He knew himself, and he therefore trusted others. He had seen among the hills the virtues, the habits, the character that make popular government simple and practicable; and he did not doubt that, under the unparalleled circumstances of the country, however political conditions might be complicated by the large infusion of other blood and other traditions, the great appeal which our institutions make to the conscious dignity and self-respect of human nature would be answered in ways we might not be able to foresee, but which experience and self-knowledge admonish us will be effective.

But, from the first to the last, his democracy never meant a rabble nor a mob, but a constitutionally self-restrained people. Bryant, indeed, was a warm party man. It was a fiery nature which always lay beneath the placid and coldly reserved manner, and which at times flashed suddenly into vehement expression. The

verse of no poet is more absolutely sincere, and the lines in the tender poem to his wife, on the future life, written in 1837, which have often seemed singularly extravagant for a man so apparently passionless, were unquestionably the fervid expression of self-knowledge.

"And wrath has left its scar—that fire of hell  
Has left its frightful scar upon my soul."

With what force he restrained himself we shall not know. We only know with what success. But his habitual moderation and calmness were not the gift of an easy, lymphatic temperament; they were the grace of a great and manly self-command. In the vast political strife of the half-century he was a foremost combatant. But his politics had no personal aims. During his life he held but two public offices—those of town-clerk and justice of the peace in Great Barrington. He was a Presidential elector in 1860, a mere honorary position, and he declined even an election as regent of the University, from his invincible dislike of any kind of public life. There is, indeed, no nobler ambition than to fill a great office greatly, but it was not in Bryant's heart. The splendid prizes of official place never allured him, and his lofty aims shone as pure in his perfect independence as the virginal beauty of Sabrina in the "glassy, cool, translucent wave."

In all the long, tumultuous years of his editorial life does any memory, however searching or censorious, recall one line that he wrote which was not honest and pure, one measure that he defended except from the profoundest conviction of its usefulness to the country,

one cause that he advocated which any friend of liberty, of humanity, of good government would deplore? When in the British Parliament, after a hard and weary and doubtful struggle of twenty years, the bill of William Wilberforce for abolishing the British slave-trade was finally passed, the historian says that Sir Samuel Romilly surprised the staid House of Commons into loud and long acclamations by comparing the greatness and happiness of Napoleon Bonaparte, then in the zenith of his imperial glory, with those of him who would this "day lay his head upon his pillow and remember that the slave-trade was no more." So it is the lesson of this editorial life, that public service, the most resplendent and the most justly renowned, on sea or shore, in cabinet or Congress, however great, however beneficent, is not a truer service than that of the private citizen like Bryant, who for half a century, with conscience and knowledge, with power and unquailing courage, did his part in holding the hand and heart of his country true to her now glorious ideal.

During all this time, the sturdy political editor was the chief literary figure in the city. Mr. Bigelow says that he never mingled or confounded his two vocations, that they were two distinct currents of intellectual life. This is doubtless true. But it is the same breath of the organ that thunders through the trumpet stop and whispers in the vox humana. In the earlier legends, it is the poet who leads the warriors, and the earlier legends were justified when the poet of "Thanatopsis" and "The Water-fowl" came down from the hills to the newspaper-office. In 1832, he was, as he says,



"wandering in Illinois, hovering on the skirts of the Indian war," when Washington Irving returned from his long European absence. In the same year a complete edition of his poems was published in New York, and he went to Europe in 1834 for the first time, returning in 1836. In 1841, and the following year, he travelled in the West and South of the United States. In 1842, "The Fountain" and other poems of seventeen years were published, and in 1844, "The White-footed Deer." He went again to Europe in 1845, seeing England for the first time. The next year a fully illustrated collection of his poems was issued, and in 1848 he read a discourse upon Cole before the National Academy of Design. In the summer of 1849 he went for the third time to Europe, and upon his return, in 1850, he published his "Letters of a Traveller." Early in 1852 he delivered a discourse on Cooper. In the spring he was in Cuba, and during the summer again in Europe. But, amid all accumulating interests and duties and renown, his unwearied editorial industry continued; an industry of which his associate says, that for five days out of every week, during forty-two years of the fifty-two that he was the chief editor, he was at his desk before eight o'clock in the morning, and left upon his journal in some form the daily impression of his character and genius.

During all this time, also, the literature that he had heralded he saw arising around him; and he greeted with cordial appreciation poets, historians, storytellers, essayists, whose names we love and who have made our name honorable. Yet, as his own poems were

published from time to time, it was plain that, through all the imposing changes of form in English literature, his simple and severe genius remained unchanged. Although he was a singularly accomplished student of the literature of many languages, and while his translations from other tongues are so felicitous that his fellow-master, Longfellow, praised some of his Spanish translations, nearly fifty years ago, as rivalling the original in beauty, yet his own verse is as free from merely literary influence or reminiscence as the pure air of his native hills from the perfume of exotics.

Undoubtedly the grandeur and solemnity of Wordsworth, as he told Dana, had stirred his soul with sympathy. But not the false simplicity that sometimes betrays Wordsworth, nor the lurid melodrama of Byron, nor the aërial fervor of Shelley, nor the luxuriant beauty of Keats, in whose line the Greek marble is sometimes suffused with a splendor as of Venetian color, nor, in his later years, the felicity and richness of Tennyson, who has revealed the flexibility and picturesqueness and modulated music of the English language in lines which a line of Keats describes,

“Like lucent sirups tinct with cinnamon,”

—not all these varying and entrancing strains, which captivated the public of the hour, touched in the least the verse of Bryant. His last considerable poem, “The Flood of Years,” but echoes in its meditative flow the solemn cadences of “Thanatopsis.” The child was father of the man. The genius of Bryant, not profuse and im-



perial, neither intense with dramatic passion nor throbbing with lyrical fervor, but calm, meditative, pure, has its true symbol among his native hills, a mountain-spring untainted by mineral or slime of earth or reptile venom, cool, limpid, and serene. His verse is the virile expression of the healthy communion of a strong, sound man with the familiar aspects of nature, and its broad, clear, open-air quality has a certain Homeric suggestiveness. It is not the poetry of an eager enthusiasm; it is not fascinating and overpowering to the sensibility of youth. The first considerable collection of 1832 was not snatched from the booksellers' hands, and four years passed before it reached a fourth edition. Bryant founded no school and he belonged to none, unless it be to the class of those who are vaguely called poets of nature. His spirit is doubtless more akin to that of Wordsworth than to any other of the "bards sublime," although he had not Wordsworth's fertility and variety and richness of imagination, and resembled him only in the meditative character of his genius. It is this essentially meditative character which makes the atmosphere of his poetic world more striking than its forms; and thus his contribution of memorable lines to our literature is not great, although there are some lines of an unsurpassed majesty, and again touches of fancy and imagination, as airy and delicate as the dance of fairies upon a moonlit lawn. One stanza, indeed, perhaps the most familiar in all his verse, will be long the climax of patriotic appeal; and for a thousand years in the country that he loved, while the absorbing contentions of politics shall continue, and there



shall be an ever-higher political aspiration and a nobler political endeavor, Bryant's lines will be the gathering-cry and battle-song of brave soldiers of humanity yet unborn :

“ Truth crushed to earth shall rise again ;  
The eternal years of God are hers :  
But Error, wounded, writhes with pain,  
And dies among his worshippers.”

Meanwhile, true to his principles, his party associations were again changing, and the close of the administration of Mr. Pierce found Bryant in the opposition. He saw in the situation of the country but one supreme issue. He saw the system of slavery entrenched in vast interests, traditions, and prejudices, in the spirit of party, in the timidity of trade, in constitutional interpretation, in the idolatry of the Union, and in a vague and universal apprehension of the illimitable evil of resistance. He saw its vast power. He acknowledged every lawful defence, every plea of expediency, every appeal of possible calamity. He had deprecated agitation, which seemed to him only to exasperate feeling and rivet bonds more closely. But now he saw—not as a Democrat, not as a New-Yorker, not as a Northerner—he saw as a man, that humanity was in danger where he could help ; he saw as an American, that America was imperilled ; he saw as a life-long lover of liberty, that liberty was vitally assailed ; and as a man, as an American, as a lover of liberty, he declared, in the spring of 1856, against the extension of slavery, and five years later his whole political faith burst forth in one indignant peal of patriotism :

“Our country calls—away, away!  
To where the blood-stream blots the green;  
Strike to defend the gentlest sway  
That Time in all his course has seen.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Strike, for that broad and goodly land,  
Blow after blow, till men shall see  
That might and right move hand in hand,  
And glorious must their triumph be.”

But he renounced none of his political principles, and when the tendency to a more consolidated and powerful central authority was naturally developed by the war, according to the faith of his life, he counselled the statesmanship of the sun, not of the wind, and held that loyalty alienated from the Union could be most surely restored and equal rights most firmly secured only by large dependence upon local law and local feeling, by long patience and slow processes of healing. It was the same man, the same patriot, the same American, asserting the same principles, who, in 1832, praised Jackson's proclamation against nullification, and, in 1837, spurned all external interference respecting the qualification of voters in New York; who, in 1863, sustained the Emancipation Proclamation, and, in 1875, denounced the interference of the national military power with the Legislature of Louisiana. But as he passed through parties, so he passed out of them. With increasing years his party zeal diminished, and under the liberalizing and mellowing influence of time he gradually became, as was said of Sir Robert Peel, “himself a party.” He had been a Federalist, a Dem-

ocrat, and a Republican; but all were only names of the various uniforms in which he served the same cause, the cause of his youth and of his age, the cause of America and of human nature.

Bryant made his fifth voyage to Europe in 1857, travelling in Spain and Algiers, and he published a volume of "Letters from Spain" upon his return. He went again in 1865 and 1867, seven times in all. It was during his absence, in 1858, that he was baptized in Naples. He had been religiously bred in New England Congregationalism, but when he came to New York he went to the little Unitarian church in Chambers Street, near Broadway, of which William Ware, the mild and apostolic author of the "Letters from Palmyra," was pastor. He went afterwards to the Second Church, of which Dr. Dewey and Dr. Osgood were subsequently ministers, and he stayed in that parish until 1863, when he found the church of his old parish, now All-Souls' Church, of which the Reverend Dr. Bellows was pastor, more accessible. In that parish he remained, and from that church he was buried. But while his religious, like his political convictions, were positive, sectarian, like political bonds, did not hold him closely. The spirit of liberty, which was the native air of his soul, fostered the celestial graces of faith, hope, charity; and he was, as his poetry and his life testify, essentially a religious man. The poem called "The Life that is," dated at Castellamare, in May, 1858, commemorates the recovery of his wife from a serious illness. A little time before, in the month of April, after a long walk with his friend, the Reverend



Mr. Waterston, of Boston, on the shore of the Bay of Naples, he spoke with softened heart of the new beauty that he felt in the old truth, and proposed to his friend to baptize him. With prayer and hymn and spiritual meditation, a little company of seven, says Mr. Waterston, in a large upper room, as in the Christian story, partook of the communion, and, with his good gray head bowed down, Bryant was baptized.

During all these busy years he had become a man of threescore and ten. The pleasant city that he knew when he came to New York was now the chief city of the western continent, one of the great cities of the world; and the poet whose immortal distinction it was to have written the first memorable American poem, and whose fame was part of the national glory—the editor who, with perfect unselfishness and unswerving fidelity, had expounded and defended great fundamental principles of national progress and prosperity, became our patriarch, our mentor, our most conspicuous citizen. Every movement of art and literature, of benevolence and good-citizenship, sought the decoration of his name. His presence was the grace of every festival, and although he had always instinctively shrunk from personal publicity, he yielded to a fate benignant for the community, and to his other distinctions added that of the occasional orator. Yet all such associations were not only gilded with the lustre of his renown; they had not only the advantage of his ample knowledge and various observations, but there was the stimulus of his temperament and character. His companions in society and at the

club know that his great literary accomplishment was absolutely without pedantry, while it gave his conversation and writing the charm of apt allusion and most felicitous quotation; but they know also how much greater was the man than the scholar, and that his character was as fine as his genius.

We saw in his life the simple dignity which we associate with the old republics. So Lycurgus may have ruled in Sparta, so Cato may have walked in Rome—an uncrowned regality in that venerable head, as of one nurtured in republican air, upon republican traditions. But here and now, at this season, when our hearts recur to that Pilgrim Landing from which so much of America sprang, we may gratefully remember that this son of New England was always, in the most generous and representative sense, an American. He loitered with the sympathy of a poet, with the fondness of a scholar, with the interest of a political thinker, in other and historic lands. He saw the Rhine and the Danube, Italy, Germany, England and Spain, Palestine and the West Indies. He was welcomed and flattered by famous men and beautiful women; but grave and simple, pleased but untouched, he passed through the maze of blandishment as a cool north wind blows through a garden of spices. Whoever saw Bryant saw America. Whoever talked with him felt the characteristic tone of American life. Whoever knew him comprehended the reason and perceived the quality of American greatness. Many Americans have been as warmly welcomed in other lands, many have acknowledged a generous hospitality with as gra-

cious courtesy, but no one ever more fully and truly carried with him the perfectly appreciative but undazzled America; America tranquil, content, and expectant, the untitled cousin of the older world, born to as great a heritage and satisfied with her own. You will bear me witness, for you knew him, that in the same way here at home he Americanized every occasion, every enterprise in which he took part. I have seen him, at some offering of homage to a foreign guest, skilfully withstanding the current of excessive compliment, natural at such times, yet without morose dissent, and only by a shrewd and playful humor, and with most friendly regard for the rites of hospitality, gently reminding us that manly and self-respecting courtesy never bows too low.

From his childhood and through all his eighty-four years his habits of life were temperate and careful. The spring in a sheltered upland nook at Cummington is still shown in which the infant boy was bathed, and the care which was there prefigured was the amulet that charmed his life. A plain, sweet method of living was natural to him, and the same moderation, which was the law of his mental and moral being, asserted itself in every bodily habit. He rose early, took active exercise, walked far and easily, spared work at night, yet had time for every duty of a fully occupied life, and at seventy-one sat down, in the shadow of the great sorrow of his life, to seek a wise distraction in translating the Iliad and the Odyssey. His sobriety was effortless; it was that of a sound man, not of an ascetic. He was not a vegetarian nor a total



abstainer from wine; but of tobacco, he said, playfully, that he did not meddle with it except to quarrel with its use. No man ever bore the burden of years more lightly, and men of younger generations saw with admiration and amazement an agility that shamed their own. At fourscore his eyes were undimmed, and his ears had a boy's acuteness. Temperance, regularity, supreme good-sense were his only rules of living, and these brought him to that hale and gracious age in which he could have applied to himself most fittingly the lofty lines of Emerson:

“As the bird trims her to the gale,  
I trim myself to the storm of time;  
I man the rudder, reef the sail,  
Obey the voice at eve, obeyed at prime:  
'Lowly faithful, banish fear,  
Right onward drive unharmed.  
The port well worth the cruise is near,  
And every wave is charmed!”

It is more than time that my voice were stilled, but I linger and linger, for when these words are spoken, the last formal commemoration of our poet will have ended, and we shall leave him to history and good fame. The whole earth, said Pericles, is the tomb of illustrious men. But how especially the characteristic aspects of American nature become to the imagination and memory memorials of Bryant. The primeval woods, “God's first temples,” breathe the solemn benediction of his verse. The rosy splendor of orchards in the bright June sunshine recalls the singer of the planting of the apple-tree—the kindly eye, the manly heart—

“ Whose part, in all the pomp that fills  
The circuit of the summer hills,  
Is that his grave is green.”

The water-fowl at evening, high in the depths of heaven, “lone wandering, but not lost,” figures his lofty, pure, and solitary strain :

“ And poured round all,  
Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste ”

murmurs his name forever along the shores we love.

Here, then, we leave him, with tender reverence for the father of our song, with grateful homage to the spotless and faithful citizen, with affectionate admiration for the simple and upright man. Here we leave him, and we—we go forward refreshed, strengthened, inspired by the light of the life which, like a star serene and inextinguishable,

“ Flames in the forehead of our morning sky.”





XIV

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE BROOKLYN INSTITUTE ON THE  
SEVENTY-THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH,  
FEBRUARY 22, 1892



## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

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THE birthday of Washington not only recalls a great historic figure, but it reminds us of the quality of great citizenship. His career is at once our inspiration and our rebuke. Whatever is lofty, fair, and patriotic in public conduct instinctively we call by his name; whatever is base, selfish, and unworthy is shamed by the lustre of his life. Like the flaming sword turning every way that guarded the gate of Paradise, Washington's example is the beacon shining at the opening of our annals and lighting the path of our national life.

But the service that makes great citizenship is as various as genius and temperament. Washington's conduct of the war was not more valuable to the country than his organization of the government, and it was not his special talent, but his character, that made both of those services possible. In public affairs the glamour of arms is always dazzling. It is the laurels of Miltiades, not those of Homer or Solon or Gorgias, which disturb and inspire the young Themistocles. But while military glory stirs the popular heart, it is the traditions of national grandeur, the force of noble character, immortal works of literature and art, which nourish the



sentiment that makes men patriots and heroes. The eloquence of Demosthenes aroused decadent Greece at least to strike for independence. The song of Körner fired the resistless charge of Lutzow's cavalry. A pamphlet of our Revolution revived the flickering flame of colonial patriotism. The speech, the song, the written word, are deeds no less than the clash of arms at Cheronea and Yorktown and Gettysburg.

It is not only Washington the soldier and the statesman, but Washington the citizen, whom we chiefly remember. Americans are accused of making an excellent and patriotic Virginia gentleman a mythological hero and demigod. But what mythological hero or demigod is a figure so fair? We say nothing of him to-day that was not said by those who saw and knew him, and in phrases more glowing than ours, and the concentrated light of a hundred years discloses nothing to mar the nobility of the incomparable man.

It was while the personal recollections and impressions of him were still fresh, while, as Lowell said, "Boston was not yet a city, and Cambridge was still a country village," that Lowell was born in Cambridge seventy-three years ago to-day. His birth on Washington's birthday seems to me a happy coincidence, because each is so admirable an illustration of the two forces whose union has made America. Massachusetts and Virginia, although of very different origin and character, were the two colonial leaders. In Virginia politics, as in the aristocratic salons of Paris on the eve of the French Revolution, there was always a theoretical democracy; but the spirit of the State was essentially aristocratic and con-

servative. Virginia was the cavalier of the Colonies, Massachusetts was the Puritan ; and when John Adams, New England personified, said in the Continental Congress that Washington ought to be general, the Puritan and the Cavalier clasped hands. The union of Massachusetts and Virginia for that emergency foretold the final union of the States—after a mighty travail of difference, indeed, and long years of strife.

The higher spirit of conservatism, its reverence for antiquity, its susceptibility to the romance of tradition, its instinct for continuity and development, and its antipathy to violent rupture, the grace and charm and courtesy of established social order,—in a word, the feminine element in national life, however far from actual embodiment in Virginia or in any colony, was to blend with the masculine force and creative energy of the Puritan spirit and produce all that we mean by America. This was the consummation which the Continental Congress did not see, but which was none the less forecast when John Adams summoned Washington to the chief Revolutionary command. It is the vision which still inspires the life and crowns the hope of every generous American, and it has had no truer interpreter and poet than Lowell. Well was he born on the anniversary of Washington's birth, for no American was ever more loyal to the lofty spirit, the grandeur of purpose, the patriotic integrity ; none ever felt more deeply the scorn of ignoble and canting Americanism, which invest the name of Washington with imperishable glory.

The house in which Lowell was born has long been known as Elmwood, a stately house embowered in lofty



trees, still full, in their season, of singing birds. It is one of the fine old mansions of which a few yet linger in the neighborhood of Boston, and it still retains its dignity of aspect, but a dignity somewhat impaired by the encroaching advance of the city and of the architectural taste of a later day. The house has its traditions, for it was built before the Revolution by the last loyal lieutenant-governor of Massachusetts, whose stout allegiance to the British crown was never shaken, and who left New England with regret when New England, also not without natural filial regret, left the British empire. It is a legend of Elmwood that Washington was once its guest, and after the Revolution it was owned by Elbridge Gerry, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, who occupied it when he was Vice-President.

Not far from Elmwood, Lowell's life-long home, is the house which is doubly renowned as the headquarters of Washington and the home of Longfellow. Nearer the colleges stands the branching elm—twin heir with the Charter Oak of patriotic story—under which Washington took command of the Revolutionary army. Indeed, Cambridge is all Revolutionary ground and rich with Revolutionary tradition. Lexington Common is but six miles away. Along the West Cambridge road galloped Paul Revere to Concord. Yonder marched the militia to Bunker Hill. Here were the quarters in which Burgoyne's red-coats were lodged after the surrender at Saratoga. But peaceful among the storied scenes of war stands the university, benign mother of educated New England, coeval with the Puritan settle-



ment which has given the master impulse to American civilization.

The American is fortunate who, like Lowell, is born among such historic scenes and local associations, and to whose cradle the good fairy has brought the gift of sensitive appreciation. His birthplace was singularly adapted to his genius and his taste. The landscape, the life, the figures of Cambridge constantly appear both in his prose and verse, but he lays little stress upon the historic reminiscence. It is the picturesqueness, the character, the humor of the life around him which attract him. This apparent indifference to the historic charm of the neighborhood is illustrated in a little story that Lowell tells of his first visit to the White Mountains. In the Franconia Notch he stopped to chat with a recluse in a saw-mill busy at work, and asked him the best point of view for the Old Man of the Mountain. The busy workman answered, "Dunno; never see it." Lowell continues: "Too young and too happy to feel or affect the Juvenalian indifference, I was sincerely astonished, and I expressed it. The log-compelling man attempted no justification, but after a little while asked, 'Come from Bawsn?' 'Yes,' with peculiar pride. 'Goodle to see in the vicinity of Bawsn?' 'Oh, yes,' I said. 'I should like—awl, I should like to stan' on Bunker Hill. You've been there often, likely?' 'No-o,' unwillingly seeing the little end of the horn in clear vision at the terminus of this Socratic perspective. 'Awl, my young fren', you've larned now that wut a man kin see any day he never does see; nawthin pay, nawthin vally!'"

Lowell entered college at fifteen and graduated at nineteen, in 1838. His literary taste and talent were already evident, for in literature even then he was an accomplished student, and he was the poet of his class, although at the close of his last year he was rusticated at Concord—a happy exile, where he saw Emerson, and probably Henry Thoreau and Margaret Fuller, who was often a guest in Emerson's house. It was here that he wrote the class poem, which gave no melodious hint of the future man, and disclosed the fact that this child of Cambridge, although a student, was as yet wholly uninfluenced by the moral and intellectual agitation called derisively transcendentalism.

Of this agitation John Quincy Adams writes in his diary, in 1840: "A young man named Ralph Waldo Emerson, a son of my once-loved friend William Emerson, and a classmate of my lamented son George, after failing in the every-day avocation of a Unitarian preacher and school-master, starts a new doctrine of transcendentalism; declares all the old revelations superannuated and worn out, and announces the approach of new revelations and prophecies. Garrison and the non-resistant abolitionists, Brownson and the Marat Democrats, phrenology and animal magnetism, all come in, furnishing each some plausible rascality as an ingredient for the bubbling cauldron of religion and politics." There could be no better expression of the bewildered and indignant consternation with which the old New England of fifty years ago regarded the awakening of the newer New England, of which John Quincy Adams himself was to be a characteristic leader, and

which was to liberalize still further American thought and American politics, enlarging religious liberty, and abolishing human slavery. Like other Boston and Harvard youth of about his time, or a little earlier, Charles Sumner, Wendell Phillips, Edmund Quincy, Lothrop Motley, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Lowell seemed to be born for studious leisure or professional routine, as yet unheeding and unconscious of the real forces that were to mould his life. Of these forces the first and the most enduring was an early and happy passion for a lovely and high-minded woman who became his wife — the Egeria who exalted his youth and confirmed his noblest aspirations; a heaven-eyed counsellor of the serener air who filled his mind with peace and his life with joy.

During these years Lowell greatly impressed his college comrades, although no adequate literary record of the promise which they felt survives. When he left college and studied law the range of his reading was already extraordinarily large, and his observation of nature singularly active and comprehensive. His mind and memory, like the Green Vaults of Dresden, were rich with treasures accumulated from every source. But his earliest songs echoed the melodies of other singers and foretold no fame. They were the confused murmuring of the bird while the dawn is deepening into day. Partly his fastidious taste, his conservative disposition, and the utter content of happy love, lapped him in soft Lydian airs which the angry public voices of the time did not disturb. But it was soon clear that the young poet whose early verses sang only his own happiness would yet fulfil Schiller's requirement that



the poet shall be a citizen of his age as well as of his country.

One of his most intimate friends, the late Charles F. Briggs, for many years a citizen of Brooklyn, and known in the literary New York of forty years ago as Harry Franco, said of him, with fine insight, that Lowell was naturally a politician, but a politician like Milton—a man, that is to say, with an instinctive grasp of the higher politics, of the duties and relations of the citizen to his country, and of those moral principles which are as essential to the welfare of States as oxygen to the breath of human life. “He will never narrow himself to a party which does not include mankind,” said his friend, “nor consent to dally with his muse when he can invoke her aid in the cause of the oppressed and suffering.” This was the just perception of affectionate intimacy. It foretold not only literary renown but patriotic inspiration, and consequent political influence in its truest and most permanent form. In Lowell’s mind, as in Milton’s, as in the spirit of the great Dutch revolt against Spain, of the later German defiance of Napoleon, and of the educated young heroes of Union and liberty in our own civil war, the words of Sir Philip Sidney to Hubert Languet presently glowed with quickening truth, “To what purpose should our thought be directed to various kinds of knowledge, unless room be afforded for putting it into practice so that public advantage may be the result.” It was not a Puritan nor a republican who wrote the words, but they contain the essential spirit of Puritan statesmanship and scholarship on both sides of the ocean.

The happy young scholar at Elmwood, devoted to literature and love, and unheeding the great movement of public affairs, showed from time to time that beneath the lettered leisure of his life there lay the conscience and moral virility that give public effect to genius and accomplishment. Lowell's development as a literary force in public affairs is unconsciously and exquisitely portrayed in the prelude to "Sir Launfal" in 1848.

"Over his keys the musing organist  
Beginning doubtfully and far away,  
First lets his fingers wander as they list,  
And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay;  
Then, as the touch of his loved instrument  
Gives hope and fervor, nearer draws his theme,  
First guessed by faint auroral flushes sent  
Along the wavering vista of his dream."

In 1844-45 his theme was no longer doubtful or far away. Although Mr. Garrison and the early abolitionists refused to vote, as an act sanctioning a government which connived at slavery, yet the slavery question had already mastered American politics. In 1844 the Texas controversy absorbed public attention, and in that and the following year Lowell's poems on Garrison, Phillips, Giddings, Palfrey, and the capture of fugitive slaves near Washington, like keen flashes leaping suddenly from a kindling pyre, announced that the antislavery cause had gained a powerful and unanticipated ally in literature. These poems, especially that on "The Present Crisis," have a Tyrtean resonance, a stately rhetorical rhythm, that make their dignity of thought, their intense feeling, and picturesque imagery, superbly effective in recitation. They sang themselves



on every antislavery platform. Wendell Phillips winged with their music and tipped with their flame the darts of his fervid appeal and manly scorn. As he quoted them with suppressed emotion in his low, melodious, penetrating voice, the white plume of the resistless Navarre of eloquence gained loftier grace, that relentless sword of invective a more flashing edge.

The last great oration of Phillips was the discourse at Harvard University on the centenary of the Phi Beta Kappa. It was not the least memorable in that long series of memorable orations at Harvard, of which the first in significance was Buckminster's in 1809, and the most familiar was Edward Everett's in 1824, its stately sentences culminating in the magnificent welcome to Lafayette, who was present. It was the first time that Phillips had been asked by his Alma Mater to speak at one of her festivals, and he rightly comprehended the occasion. He was never more himself, and he held an audience, culled from many colleges and not predisposed to admire, in shuddering delight by the classic charm of his manner and the brilliancy of his unsparing censure of educated men as recreant to political progress. The orator was nearly seventy years old. He was conscious that he should never speak again upon a greater occasion nor to a more distinguished audience, and, as his discourse ended, as if to express completely the principle of his own life and of the cause to which it had been devoted, and the spirit which alone could secure the happy future of his country if it was to justify the hope of her children, he repeated the words of Lowell:



"New occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth.  
They must upward still and onward who would keep abreast of Truth.  
Lo! before us gleam her camp-fires, we ourselves must pilgrims be,  
Launch our Mayflower and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,  
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key."

When Lowell wrote the lines he was twenty-five years old. He was thoroughly stirred by the cause which Edmund Quincy, in reply to Motley's question, "What public career does America offer?" had declared to be "the noblest in the world." But Lowell felt that he was before all a poet. When he was twenty-seven he wrote: "If I have any vocation, it is the making of verse. When I take my pen for that, the world opens itself ungrudgingly before me; everything seems clear and easy, as it seems sinking to the bottom would be, as one leans over the edge of his boat in one of those dear coves at Fresh Pond. But when I do prose it is *invita Minerva*. I feel as if I were wasting time and keeping back my message. My true place is to serve the cause as a poet. Then my heart leaps before me into the conflict." Already the musing organist had ceased to dream, and he was about to strike a chord in a strange and unexpected key, and with a force to which the public conscience would thrill in answer.

Lowell was an intense New-Englander. There is no finer figure of the higher Puritan type. The New England soil from which he sprang was precious to him.

The New England legend, the New England language, the New England character and achievement, were all his delight and familiar study. Nobody who could adequately depict the Yankee ever knew him as Lowell knew him for he was at heart the Yankee that he drew. The Yankee early became the distinctive representative of America. He is the Uncle Sam of comedy and caricature. Even the sweet-souled Irving could not resist the universal laugh, and gave it fresh occasion by his portrait of Ichabod Crane. Those who preferred the cavalier and courtier as a national type, traced the Yankee's immediate descent from the snivelling, sanctimonious, and crafty zealots of Cromwell's parliament. Jack Downing and Sam Slick, the coarser farces and stories, broadly exaggerated this conception, and, in our great controversy of the century, the antislavery movement was derided as the superserviceable, sneaking fanaticism of the New England children of Tribulation Wholesome and Zealin-the-land Busy, to whom the Southern sons of gallant cavaliers and gentlemen would teach better morals and manners. The Yankee was made a byword of scorn, and identified with a disturber of the national peace and the enemy of the glorious Union. Many a responsible citizen, many a prosperous merchant in New York and Boston and Philadelphia, many a learned divine, whose honor it was that they were Yankees, felt a half-hearted shame in the name, and grudged the part played by their noses in conversation. They seemed perpetually to hear a voice of contempt saying, "Thy nose bewrayeth thee."

This was the figure which, with the instinct of genius,

with true New England pride and the joy of conscious power, Lowell made the representative of liberty-loving, generous, humane, upright, wise, conscientious, indignant America. He did not abate the Yankee a jot or a tittle. He magnified his characteristic drawl, his good-natured simplicity, his provincial inexperience. But he revealed his unbending principle, his supreme good-sense, his lofty patriotism, his unquailing courage. He scattered the clouds of hatred and ignorance that deformed and caricatured him, and showed him in his daily habit as he lived, the true and worthy representative of America, with mother-wit preaching the gospel of Christ, and in plain native phrase applying it to a tremendous public exigency in Christian America. The Yankee dialect of New England, like the Yankee himself, had become a jest of farce and extravaganza. But, thoroughly aroused, Lowell grasped it as lightly as Hercules his club, and struck a deadly blow at the Hydra that threatened the national life. Burns did not give to the Scottish tongue a nobler immortality than Lowell gave to the dialect of New England.

In June, 1846, the first Biglow paper, which, in a letter written at the time, Lowell called "a squib of mine," was published in the *Boston Courier*. That squib was a great incident in the history of both American literature and politics. The serious tone of our literature from its grave colonial beginning had been almost unbroken. The rollicking laugh of Knickerbocker was a solitary sound in our literary air until the gay note of Holmes returned a merry echo. But humor as a literary force in political discussion was



still more unknown, and in the fierce slavery controversy it was least to be anticipated. Banter in so stern a debate would seem to be blasphemy, and humor as a weapon of antislavery warfare was almost inconceivable. The letters of Major Jack Downing, a dozen years before the "Biglow Papers," were merely political extravaganzas to raise a derisive laugh. They were fun of a day, and forgotten. Lowell's humor was of another kind. It was known to his friends, but it was not a characteristic of Lowell the author. In his early books there is no sign of it. It was not a humorist whom the good-natured Willis welcomed in his airy way, saying that posterity would know him as Russell Lowell. Willis thought, perhaps, that another dainty and graceful trifler had entered the charmed circle of literature that pleases but not inspires.

But suddenly, and for the first time, the absorbing struggle of freedom and slavery for control of the Union was illuminated by a humor radiant and piercing, which broke over it like daylight, and exposed relentlessly the sophistry and shame of the slave-power. No speech, no plea, no appeal was comparable in popular and permanent effect with this pitiless tempest of fire and hail, in the form of wit, argument, satire, knowledge, insight, learning, common-sense, and patriotism. It was humor of the purest strain, but humor in deadly earnest. In its course, as in that of a cyclone, it swept all before it—the press, the Church, criticism, scholarship—and it bore resistlessly down upon the Mexican War, the pleas for slavery, the congressional debates, the conspicuous public men. Its contempt-

uous scorn of the public cowardice that acquiesced in the aggressions of the slave-power startled the dormant manhood of the North and of the country.

"The North hain't no kind of business with nothin',  
 An' you've no idee how much bother it saves.  
 We ain't none riled by their frettin' and frothin'.  
 We're *used* to layin' the string on our slaves,"  
 Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;—  
     Sez Mister Foote,  
     "I should like to shoot  
 The holl gang, by the great horn spoon!" sez he.

"The mass ough' to labor an' we lay on soffies,  
 Thet's the reason I want to spread Freedom's aree;  
 It puts all the cunninest on us in office,  
 An' reelises our Maker's orig'nal idee,"  
 Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;—  
     "Thet's ez plain," sez Cass,  
     Ez thet some one's an ass,  
 It's ez clear ez the sun is at noon," sez he.

"Now don't go to say I'm the friend of oppression,  
 But keep all your spare breath fer coolin' your broth;  
 Fer I ollers hev strove (at least thet's my impression)  
 To make cussed free with the rights o' the North,"  
 Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;—  
     "Yes," sez Davis o' Miss.,  
     "The perfection o' bliss  
 Is in skinnin' thet same old coon," sez he.

Such lines, as with a stroke of lightning, were burned into the hearts and conscience of the North. Read to-day, they recall, as nothing else can recall, the intensity of the feeling which swiftly flamed into civil war.

Apart from their special impulse and influence, the

"Biglow Papers" were essentially and purely American. It is sometimes said that the best American poetry is only English poetry written on this side of the ocean. But the "Biglow Papers" are as distinctively American as "Tam O' Shanter" is Scotch or the "Divine Comedy" Italian. They could have been written nowhere else but in Yankee New England by a New England Yankee. With "Uncle Tom's Cabin" they are the chief literary memorial of the contest—a memorial which, as literature, and for their own delight, our children's children will read, as we read to-day the satires that scourge the long-vanished Rome which Juvenal knew, and the orations of Burke that discuss long-perished politics. So strong was Lowell's antislavery ardor that he proudly identified himself with the abolitionists. Simultaneously with the publication of the first series of the "Biglow Papers," he became a corresponding editor with Edmund Quincy of the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, the organ of the American Antislavery Society, and in a letter to his friend, Sydney Howard Gay, the editor of the paper, he says: "I was not only willing but desirous that my name should appear, because I scorned to be indebted for any share of my modicum of popularity to my abolitionism, without incurring at the same time whatever odium might be attached to a complete identification with a body of heroic men and women whom not to love and admire would prove me to be unworthy of those sentiments, and whose superiors in all that constitutes true manhood and womanhood I believe never existed."

But his antislavery ardor was far from being his sole and absorbing interest and activity. Lowell's



studies, more and more various and incessant, were so comprehensive that if not, like Bacon, all knowledge, yet he took all literature for his province, and in 1855 he was appointed to the chair of modern languages and belles-lettres in Harvard University, succeeding Longfellow and Ticknor—an illustrious group of American scholars which gives to that chair a distinction unparalleled in our schools. His love and mastery of books were extraordinary, and his devotion to study so relentless that in those earlier years he studied sometimes fourteen hours in the day, and pored over books until his sight seemed to desert him. But it was no idle or evanescent reading. Probably no American student was so deeply versed in the old French romance; none knew Dante and the Italians more profoundly; German literature was familiar to him, and perhaps even Ticknor in his own domain of Spanish lore was not more a master than Lowell. The whole range of English literature, not only its noble Elizabethan heights, but a delightful realm of picturesque and unfrequented paths, was his familiar park of pleasure. Yet he was not a scholarly recluse, a pedant, or a bookworm. The student of books was no less so acute and trained an observer of nature, so sympathetic a friend of birds and flowers, so sensitive to the influences and aspects of out-of-door life, that, as Charles Briggs with singular insight said that he was meant for a politician, so Darwin with frank admiration said that he was born to be a naturalist. He was as much the contented companion of Izaak Walton and White of Selborne as of Donne or Calderon. His social sym-

pathies were no less strong than his fondness for study, and he was the most fascinating of comrades. His extraordinary knowledge, whether of out-door or of in-door derivation, and the racy humor in which his knowledge was fused, overflowed his conversation. There is no historic circle of wits and scholars, not that of Beaumont and Ben Jonson—where, haply, Shakespeare sat—nor Pope's, nor Dryden's, nor Addison's, nor Dr. Johnson's club, nor that of Edinburgh, nor any Parisian salon or German study, to which Lowell's abundance would not have contributed a golden drop, and his glancing wit a glittering repartee. It was not of reading, merely; it was of the reading of a man of Lowell's intellectual power and resource that Bacon said, "reading maketh a full man."

He had said in 1846 that it was as a poet that he could do his best work. But the poetic temperament and faculty do not exclude prose, and, like Milton's swain, "he touched the tender stops of various quills." The young poet early showed that prose would be as obedient a familiar to his genius as the tricky Ariel of verse. Racy and rich, and often of the most sonorous or delicate cadence, it is still the prose of a poet and a master of the differences of form. His prose indeed is often profoundly poetic—that is, quick with imagination, but always in the form of prose, not of poetry. It is so finely compact of illustration, of thought and learning, of wit and fancy and permeating humor, that his prose page sparkles and sways like a phosphorescent sea. "Oblivion," he says, "looks in the face of the Grecian muse only to forget her errand." And again: "The

garners of Sicily are empty now, but the bees from all climes still fetch honey from the tiny garden-plot of Theocritus." Such concentrated sentences are marvels of felicity, and, although unmetred, are as exquisite as songs.

Charles Emerson said of Shakespeare, "He sat above this hundred-handed play of his imagination pensive and conscious," and so Lowell is remembered by those who knew him well. Literature was his earliest love and his latest delight, and he has been often called the first man of letters of his time. The phrase is vague, but it expresses the feeling that, while he was a poet and a scholar and a humorist and a critic, he was something else and something more. The feeling is perfectly just. Living all summer by the sea, we watch with fascinated eyes the long-flowing lines, the flash and gleam of multitudinous waters; but beneath them all is the mighty movement of unfathomed ocean, on whose surface only these undulating splendors play. Literature, whether in prose or verse, was the form of Lowell's activity, but its master impulse was not æsthetic, but moral. When the activities of his life were ended, in a strain of clear and tender reminiscence he sang:

"I sank too deep in the soft-stuffed repose,  
That hears but rumors of earth's wrongs and woes;  
Too well these Capuas could my muscles waste,  
Not void of toils, but toils of choice and taste.  
These still had kept me could I but have quelled  
The Puritan drop that in my veins rebelled."

Literature was his pursuit, but patriotism was his pas-



sion. His love of country was that of a lover for his mistress. He resented the least imputation upon the ideal America, and nothing was finer than his instinctive scorn for the pinchbeck patriotism which brags and boasts and swaggers, insisting that bigness is greatness, and vulgarity simplicity, and the will of a majority the moral law. No man perceived more shrewdly the American readiness of resource, the Yankee good-nature, and the national rectitude. But he was not satisfied with an easy standard. To him the best, not the thriftiest, was most truly American. Lowell held that of all men the American should be master of his boundless material resources, not their slave; worthy of his unequalled opportunities, not the sycophant of his fellow-Americans nor the victim of national conceit. No man rejoiced more deeply over our great achievements, or celebrated them with ampler or prouder praise. He delighted with Yankee glee in our inventive genius and restless enterprise, but he knew that we did not invent the great muniments of liberty, trial by jury, the habeas corpus, constitutional restraint, the common school—of all which we were common heirs with civilized Christendom. He knew that we have Niagara and the prairies and the Great Lakes and the majestic Mississippi; but he knew also, with another great American, that

“Earth proudly wears the Parthenon  
As the best gem upon her zone.  
And Morning opes with haste her lids  
To gaze upon the Pyramids.”

As he would not accept a vulgar caricature of the

New-Englander as a Yankee, so he spurned Captain Bobadil as a type of the American, for he knew that a nation may be as well-bred among nations as a gentleman among gentlemen, and that to bully weakness or to cringe to strength are equally cowardly, and therefore not truly American.

Lowell's loftiest strain is inspired by this patriotic ideal. To borrow a German phrase from modern musical criticism, it is the *leit motif* which is constantly heard in the poems and the essays, and that inspiration reached its loftiest expression, both in prose and poetry, in the discourse on Democracy and the Commemoration Ode. The genius of enlightened Greece breathes audibly still in the oration of Pericles on the Peloponnesian dead. The patriotic heart of America throbs forever in Lincoln's Gettysburg address. But nowhere in literature is there a more magnificent and majestic personification of a country whose name is sacred to its children, nowhere a profounder passion of patriotic loyalty, than in the closing lines of the Commemoration Ode. The American whose heart, swayed by that lofty music, does not thrill and palpitate with solemn joy and high resolve, does not yet know what it is to be an American.

Like all citizens of high public ideals, Lowell was inevitably a public critic and censor, but he was much too good a Yankee not to comprehend the practical conditions of political life in this country. No man understood better than he such truth as lies in John Morley's remark: "Parties are a field where action is a long second best, and where the choice constantly lies be-

tween two blunders." He did not therefore conclude that there is no alternative, that "naught is everything and everything is naught." But he did see clearly that, while the government of a republic must be a government by party, yet that independence of party is much more vitally essential in a republic than fidelity to party. Party is a servant of the people, but a servant who is foolishly permitted by his master to assume sovereign airs, like Christopher Sly, the tinker, whom the Lord's attendants obsequiously salute as master:

"Look how thy servants do attend on thee;  
Each in his office ready at thy beck."

To a man of the highest public spirit like Lowell, and of the supreme self-respect which always keeps faith with itself, no spectacle is sadder than that of intelligent, superior, honest public men prostrating themselves before a party, professing what they do not believe, affecting what they do not feel, from abject fear of an invisible fetich, a chimera, a name, to which they alone give reality and force, as the terrified peasant himself made the spectre of the Brocken before which he quailed. The last great patriotic service of Washington—and none is more worthy of enduring commemoration on this anniversary—was the farewell address, with its strong and stern warning that party government may become a ruthless despotism, and that a majority must be watched as jealously as a king.

With his lofty patriotism and his extraordinary public conscience, Lowell was distinctively the Independent in politics. He was an American and a republican citizen.



He acted with parties as every citizen must act if he acts at all. But the notion that a voter is a traitor to one party when he votes with another was as ludicrous to him as the assertion that it is treason to the White Star steamers to take passage in a Cunarder. When he would know his public duty, Lowell turned within, not without. He listened, not for the roar of the majority in the street, but for the still small voice in his own breast. For while the method of republican government is party, its basis is individual conscience and common-sense. This entire political independence Lowell always illustrated. He was born in the last days of New England Federalism. His uncle, John Lowell, was a leader in the long and bitter Federalist controversy with John Quincy Adams. The Whig dynasty succeeded the Federal in Massachusetts, but Lowell's first public interest was the antislavery agitation, and he identified himself with the abolitionists. He retained, however, his individual view, and did not sympathize with the policy that sought the dissolution of the Union, and which refused to vote. In 1850, he says, in a private letter to his friend Gay, alluding to some difference of opinion with the Antislavery Society, "there has never been a oneness of sentiment," that is to say, complete identity, "between me and the Society;" and a passage in a letter written upon election day, November, 1850, illustrates his independent position: "I shall vote the Union ticket (half Free-soil, half Democratic), not from any love of the Democrats, but because I believe it to be the best calculated to achieve some practical result. It is a great object to overturn

the Whig domination, and this seems to be the only lever to pry them over with. Yet I have my fears that if we get a Democratic governor he will play some trick or other. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*, if you will pardon stale Latin to Parson Wilbur."

This election is memorable because it overthrew the Whig domination in Massachusetts, and made Charles Sumner the successor of Daniel Webster in the Senate. It restored to the State of Samuel Adams the same political leadership before the civil war that she had held before the Revolution. The Republican party, with whose antislavery impulse Lowell was in full accord, arose from the Whig ruins, and, whether in a party or out of a party, he was himself the great illustration of the political independence that he represented and maintained. As he allowed no church or sect to dictate his religious views or control his daily conduct, so he permitted no party to direct his political action. He was a Whig, an abolitionist, a Republican, a Democrat, according to his conception of the public exigency, and never as a partisan. From 1863 to 1872 he was joint editor, with his friend Mr. Norton, of the *North American Review*, and he wrote often of public affairs. But his papers all belong to the higher politics, which are those of the man and the citizen, not of the partisan—a distinction which may be traced in Burke's greatest speeches, where it is easy to distinguish what is said by Burke, the wise and patriotic Englishman (for such he really was), from what is said by the Whig in opposition to the Treasury Bench.

But, whatever his party associations and political

sympathies, Lowell was at heart and by temperament conservative, and his patriotic independence in our politics is the quality which is always unconsciously recognized as the truly conservative element in the country. In the tumultuous excitement of our popular elections the real appeal on both sides is not to party, which is already committed, but to those citizens who are still open to reason and may yet be persuaded. In the most recent serious party appeal, the orator said, "Above all things, political fitness should lead us not to forget that at the end of our plans we must meet face to face at the polls the voters of the land, with ballots in their hands, demanding, as a condition of the support of our party, fidelity and undivided devotion to the cause in which we have enlisted them." This recognizes an independent tribunal which judges party. It implies that, besides the host who march under the party color and vote at the party command, there are citizens who may or may not wear a party uniform, but who vote only at their own individual command, and who give the victory. They may be angrily classified as political Laodiceans; but it is to them that parties appeal, and rightly, because, except for this body of citizens, the despotism of party would be absolute, and the republic would degenerate into a mere oligarchy of "bosses."

There could be no more signal tribute to political independence than that which was offered to Lowell in 1876. He was a Republican elector, and the result of the election was disputed. A peaceful solution of the difference seemed for some months to be doubt-



ful, although the Constitution apparently furnished it; for if an elector, or more than one, should differ from his party and exercise his express and unquestionable constitutional right, in strict accord with the constitutional intention, the threatened result might be averted. But, in the multitude of electors, Lowell alone was mentioned as one who might exercise that right. The suggestion was at once indignantly resented as an insult, because it was alleged to imply possible bad faith. But it was not so designed. It indicated that Lowell was felt to be a man who, should he think it to be his duty, under the indisputable constitutional provision, to vote differently from the expectation of his party, would certainly do it. But those who made the suggestion did not perceive that he could not feel it to be his duty, because nobody saw more clearly than he that an unwritten law with all the force of honor forbade. The constitutional intention was long since superseded by a custom sanctioned by universal approval, which makes the Presidential elector the merest ministerial agent of a party, and the most wholly ceremonial figure in our political system.

By the time that he was fifty years old, Lowell's conspicuous literary accomplishment and poetic genius, with his political independence, courage, and ability, had given him a position and influence unlike those of any other American; and when in 1877 he was appointed Minister to Spain, and in 1880 transferred to England, there was a feeling of blended pride and satisfaction that his country would be not only effectively but nobly represented. Mr. Emerson once said of

an English minister, "He is a charming gentleman, but he does not represent the England that I know." In Lowell, however, no man in the world who honored America and believed in the grandeur of American destiny but would find his faith and hope confirmed. To give your best, says the Oriental proverb, is to do your utmost. The coming of such a man, therefore, was the highest honor that America could pay to England. If we may personify America, we can fancy a certain grim humor on her part in presenting this son of hers to the mother country, a sapling of the older oak more sinewy and supple than the parent stock. No eminent American has blended the Cavalier and the Puritan tradition, the romantic conservatism and the wise radicalism of the English blood, in a finer cosmopolitanism than Lowell. It was this generous comprehension of both which made him peculiarly and intelligently at home in England, and which also made him much more than his Excellency the Ambassador of American Literature to the Court of Shakespeare, as the London *Spectator* called him upon his arrival in London, for it made him the representative to England of an American scholarship, a wit, an intellectual resource, a complete and splendid accomplishment, a social grace and charm, a felicity of public and private speech, and a weight of good-sense, which pleasantly challenged England to a continuous and friendly bout in which America did not suffer.

During his official residence in England, Lowell seemed to have the fitting word for every occasion, and

to speak it with memorable distinction. If a memorial of Dean Stanley were erected in his Chapter House, or of Fielding at Taunton, or of Coleridge in Westminster Abbey, or of Gray at Cambridge, the desire of literary England turned instinctively to Lowell as the orator whose voice would give the best expression, and whose character and renown the greatest dignity, to the hour. In Wordsworth's England, as President of the Wordsworth Society, he spoke of the poet with an affectionate justice which makes his speech, with the earlier essay, the finest estimate of Wordsworth's genius and career; and of Don Quixote he spoke to the Workingman's College with a poetic appreciation of the genius of Cervantes and a familiarity with Spanish literature which was a revelation to British workmen. Continuously at public dinners, with consummate tact and singular felicity, he spoke with a charm that seemed to disclose a new art of oratory. He did not decline even political speech, except of course in a partisan sense. His discourse on Democracy, at Birmingham, in October, 1884, was not only an event, but an event without precedent. He was the minister of the American republic to the British monarchy, and, as that minister, publicly to declare in England the most radical democratic principles as the ultimate logical result of the British Constitution, and to do it with a temper, an urbanity, a moderation, a precision of statement, and a courteous grace of humor, which charmed doubt into acquiescence, and amazement into unfeigned admiration and acknowledgment of a great service to political thought greatly done—this was an



event unknown in the annals of diplomacy, and this is what Lowell did at Birmingham.

No American orator has made so clear and comprehensive a declaration of the essential American principle, or so simple a statement of its ethical character. Yet not a word of this republican, to whom Algernon Sydney would have bowed, and whom Milton would have blessed, would have jarred the Tory nerves of Sir Roger de Coverley, although no English radical was ever more radical than he. The frantic French democracy of 1793, gnashing its teeth in the face of royal power, would have equality and fraternity if every man were guillotined to secure it. The American republic, speaking to monarchical Europe a century later by the same voice with which Sir Launfal had shown the identity of Christianity with human sympathy and succor, set forth in the address at Birmingham the truth that democracy is simply the practical application of moral principle to politics. There were many and great services in Lowell's life, but none of them all seems to me more characteristic of the man than when, holding the commission of his country, and in his own person representing its noblest character, standing upon soil sacred to him by reverend and romantic tradition, his American heart loyal to the English impulse, which is the impulse of constitutional liberty, for one memorable moment he made monarchical England feel for republican America the same affectionate admiration that she felt for him, the republican American. His last official words in England show the reciprocal feeling. "While I came here as a far-off cousin," he said,

"I feel that you are sending me away as something like a brother." He died, the poet, the scholar, the critic, the public counsellor, the ambassador, the patriot, and the sorrowing voice of the English laureate and of the English queen, the highest voices of English literature and political power, mingling with the universal voice of his own country, showed how instinctively and surely the true American, faithful to the spirit of Washington and of Abraham Lincoln, reconciles and not exasperates international feeling.

So varied, so full and fair, is the story of Lowell's life, and such services to the mind and heart and character of his country we commemorate on this hallowed day. In the golden morning of our literature and national life there is no more fascinating and inspiring figure. His literary achievement, his patriotic distinction, and his ennobling influence upon the character and lives of generous American youth, gave him at last power to speak with more authority than any living American for the intellect and conscience of America. Upon those who knew him well, so profound was the impression of his resource and power that their words must seem to be mere eulogy. All that he did was but the hint of this superb affluence, this comprehensive grasp, the overflow of an exhaustless supply, so that it seemed to be only incidental, not his life's business. Even his literary production was impromptu. "Sir Launfal" was the work of two days. The "Fable for Critics" was an amusement amid severer studies. The discourse on Democracy was large-

ly written upon the way to Birmingham. Of no man could it be said more truly that

“Half his strength he put not forth.”

But that must be always the impression of men of so large a mould and of such public service that they may be properly commemorated on this anniversary. Like mountain summits, bright with sunrise, that announce the day, such Americans are harbingers of the future which shall justify our faith and fulfil the promise of America to mankind. In our splendid statistics of territorial extension, of the swift civilization of the Western world, of the miracles of our material invention; in that vast and smiling landscape, the home of a powerful and peaceful people, humming with industry and enterprise, rich with the charm of every climate, from Katahdin that hears the distant roar of the Atlantic to the Golden Gate through which the soft Pacific sighs, and in every form of visible prosperity, we see the resplendent harvest of the mighty sowing, two hundred years ago, of the new continent with the sifted grain of the old. But this is not the picture of national greatness, it is only its glittering frame. Intellectual excellence, noble character, public probity, lofty ideals, art, literature, honest politics, righteous laws, conscientious labor, public spirit, social justice, the stern, self-criticising patriotism which fosters only what is worthy of an enlightened people, not what is unworthy—such qualities and achievements, and such alone, measure the greatness of a State, and those who illustrate them are great citizens. They are the



men whose lives are a glorious service and whose memories are a benediction. Among that great company of patriots let me to-day, reverently and gratefully, blend the name of Lowell with that of Washington.

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